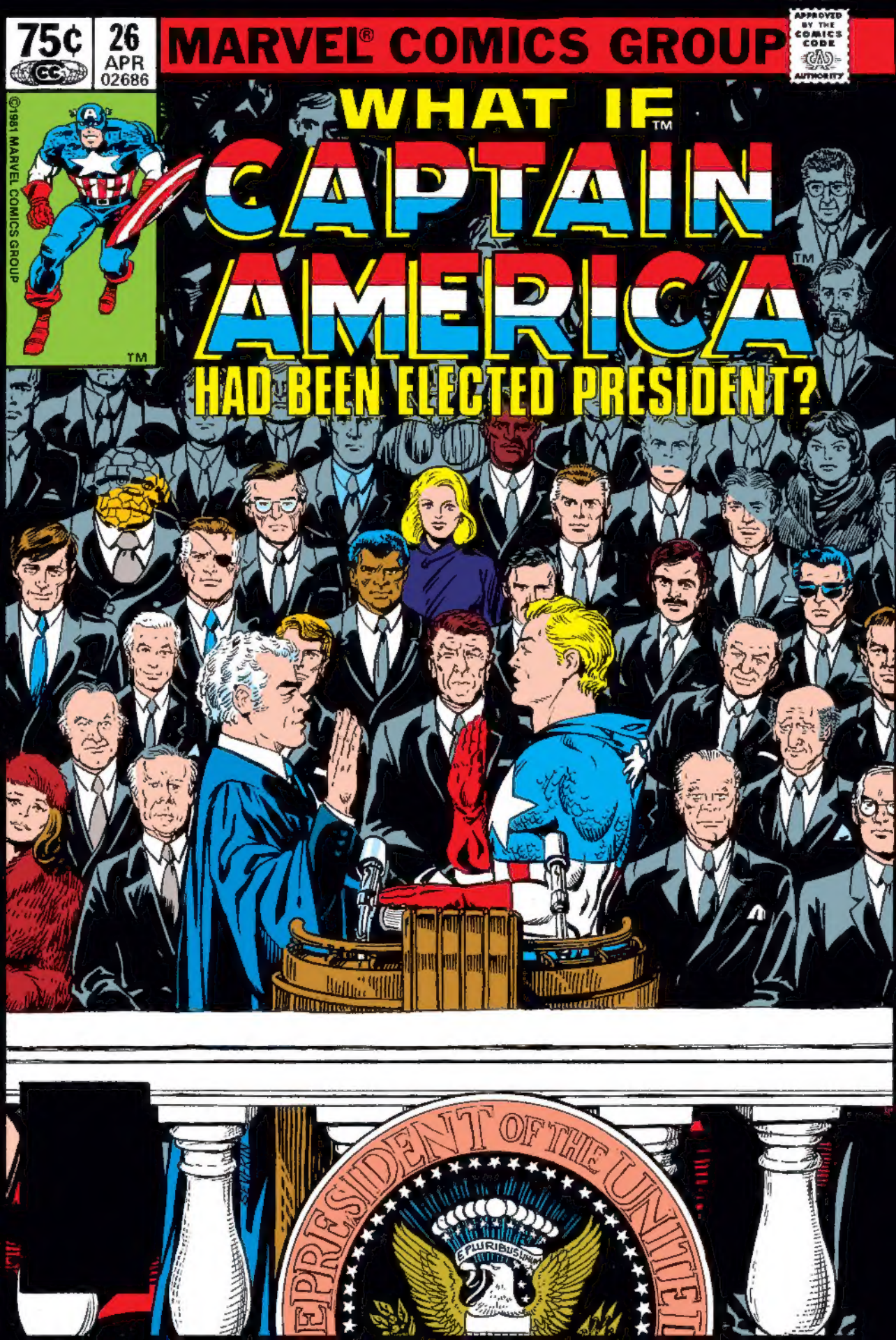
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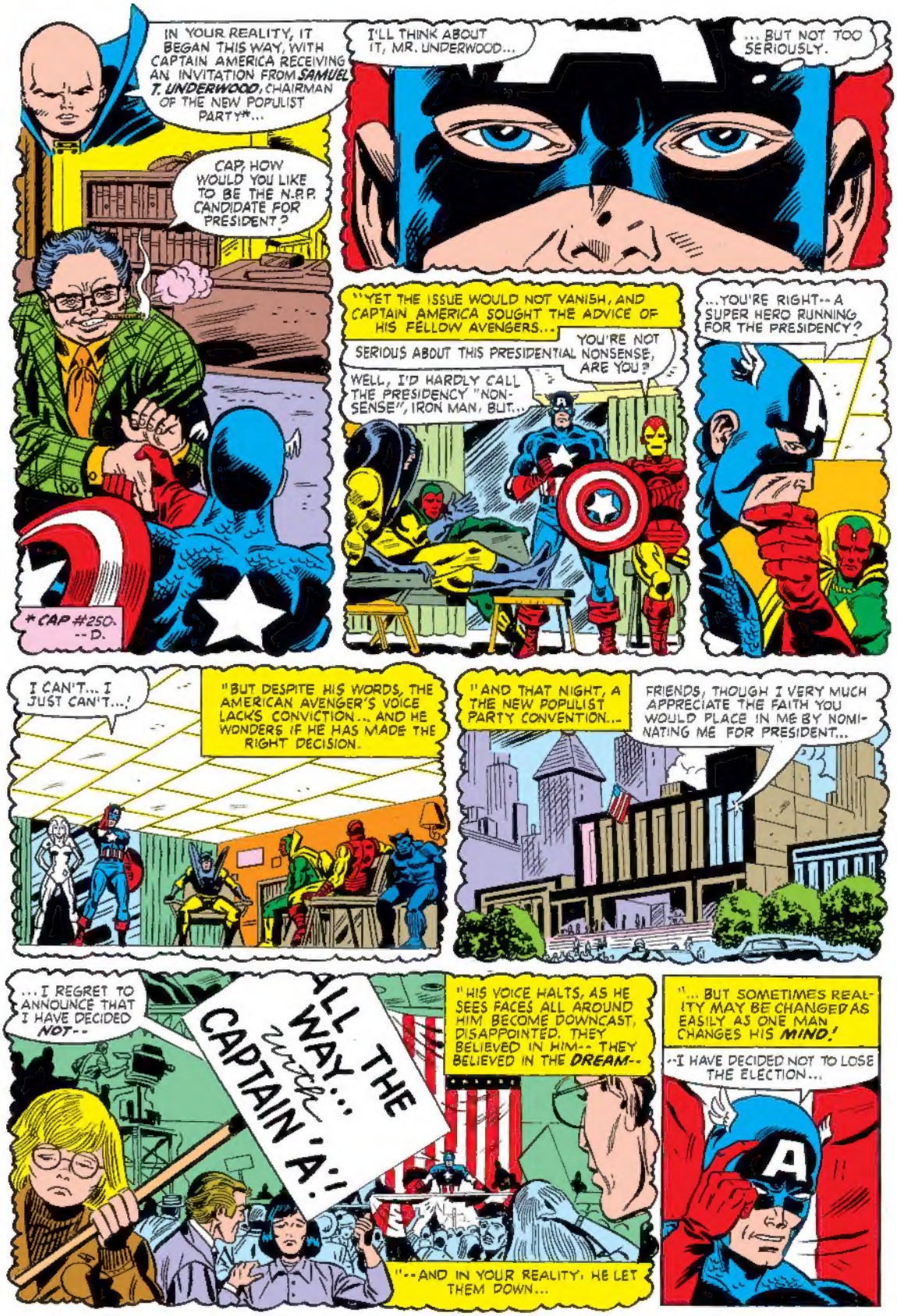
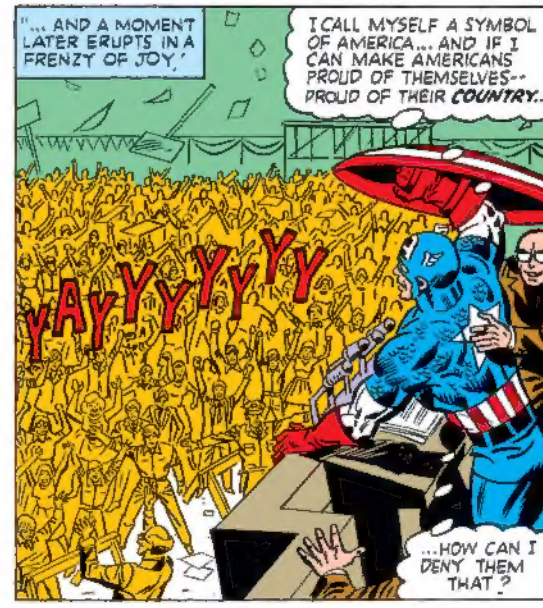
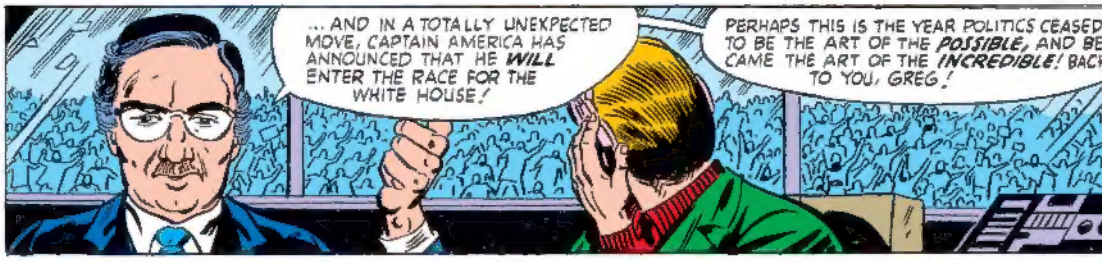
TM
WHAT IF™
CAPTAIN AMERICA™
HAD BEEN ELECTED PRESIDENT?
E PLURIBUS UNUM
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED

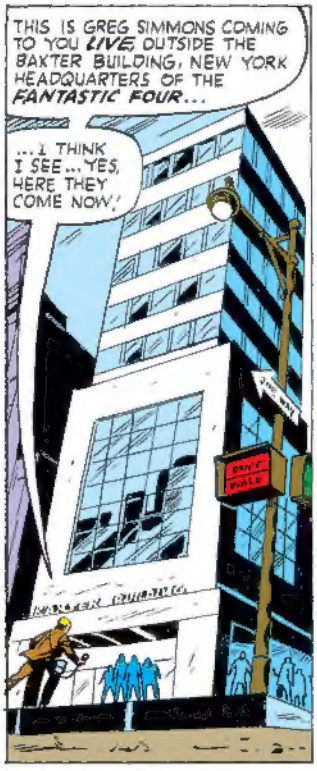
Stan Lee PRESENTS: A STUNNING SAGA OF AN ALTERNATE REALITY!
I AM THE WATCHER, AND MY PERCEPTIONS ENABLE ME TO PEER BEYOND THE REALITY YOU KNOW, TO ALTERNATE REALMS WHERE THE FABRIC OF FATE FOLLOWS DIFFERENT PATHS. COME WITH ME AS I EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY...
WHAT IF™
CAPTAIN AMERICA®
WERE ELECTED PRESIDENT?
VOTE THE MARVEL TICKET!
X MIKE W. BARR, WRITER
X HERB TRIMPE & MIKE ESPOSITO, ARTISTS
X M. P. HIGGINS, LETTERER
X C. GAFFORD, COLORIST
DENNY O'NEIL EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER BALLOT BOX STUFFER
BASED ON AN IDEA BY ROGER McKENZIE & DON PERLIN
WITH THE CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ROGER STERN & JOHN BYRNE


IN YOUR REALITY, IT BEGAN THIS WAY, WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA RECEIVING AN INVITATION FROM SAMUEL T. UNDERWOOD, CHAIRMAN OF THE NEW POPULIST PARTY*...
CAP, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE THE N.P.P. CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT?
* CAP #250. --D.
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT, MR. UNDERWOOD...
... BUT NOT TOO SERIOUSLY.
"YET THE ISSUE WOULD NOT VANISH, AND CAPTAIN AMERICA SOUGHT THE ADVICE OF HIS FELLOW AVENGERS...
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS ABOUT THIS PRESIDENTIAL NONSENSE, ARE YOU?
WELL, I'D HARDLY CALL THE PRESIDENCY "NONSENSE", IRON MAN, BUT...
...YOU'RE RIGHT-- A SUPER HERO RUNNING FOR THE PRESIDENCY?
I CAN'T... I JUST CAN'T...!
"BUT DESPITE HIS WORDS, THE AMERICAN AVENGER'S VOICE LACKS CONVICTION... AND HE WONDERS IF HE HAS MADE THE RIGHT DECISION.
"AND THAT NIGHT, A THE NEW POPULIST PARTY CONVENTION...
FRIENDS, THOUGH I VERY MUCH APPRECIATE THE FAITH YOU WOULD PLACE IN ME BY NOMINATING ME FOR PRESIDENT...
...I REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THAT I HAVE DECIDED NOT--
ALL THE WAY... with CAPTAIN 'A'!
"HIS VOICE HALTS, AS HE SEES FACES ALL AROUND HIM BECOME DOWNCAST, DISAPPOINTED. THEY BELIEVED IN HIM-- THEY BELIEVED IN THE DREAM--
"--AND IN YOUR REALITY, HE LET THEM DOWN...
"... BUT SOMETIMES REALITY MAY BE CHANGED AS EASILY AS ONE MAN CHANGES HIS MIND!
--I HAVE DECIDED NOT TO LOSE THE ELECTION...
A

...BECAUSE I WILL RUN-- AND WE WILL WIN!
"THE CROWD PAUSES, STUNNED...

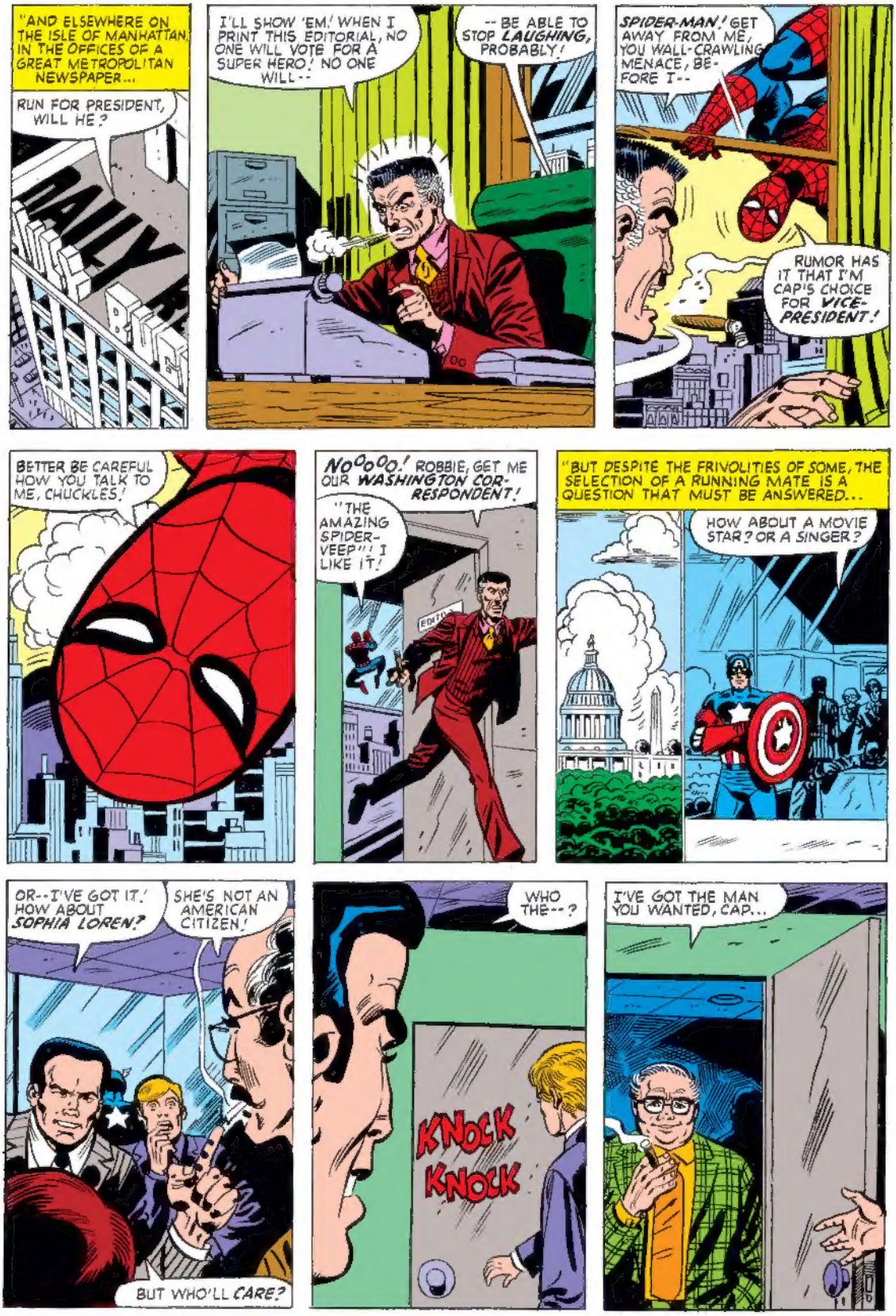

"... AND A MOMENT LATER ERUPTS IN A FRENZY OF JOY.'
I CALL MYSELF A SYMBOL OF AMERICA... AND IF I CAN MAKE AMERICANS PROUD OF THEMSELVES-- PROUD OF THEIR COUNTRY...
YAYYYYYY
...HOW CAN I DENY THEM THAT?


... AND IN A TOTALLY UNEXPECTED MOVE, CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL ENTER THE RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE!
PERHAPS THIS IS THE YEAR POLITICS CEASED TO BE THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE, AND BECAME THE ART OF THE INCREDIBLE! BACK TO YOU, GREG!


THIS IS GREG SIMMONS COMING TO YOU LIVE OUTSIDE THE BAXTER BUILDING, NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR...
...I THINK I SEE... YES, HERE THEY COME NOW!

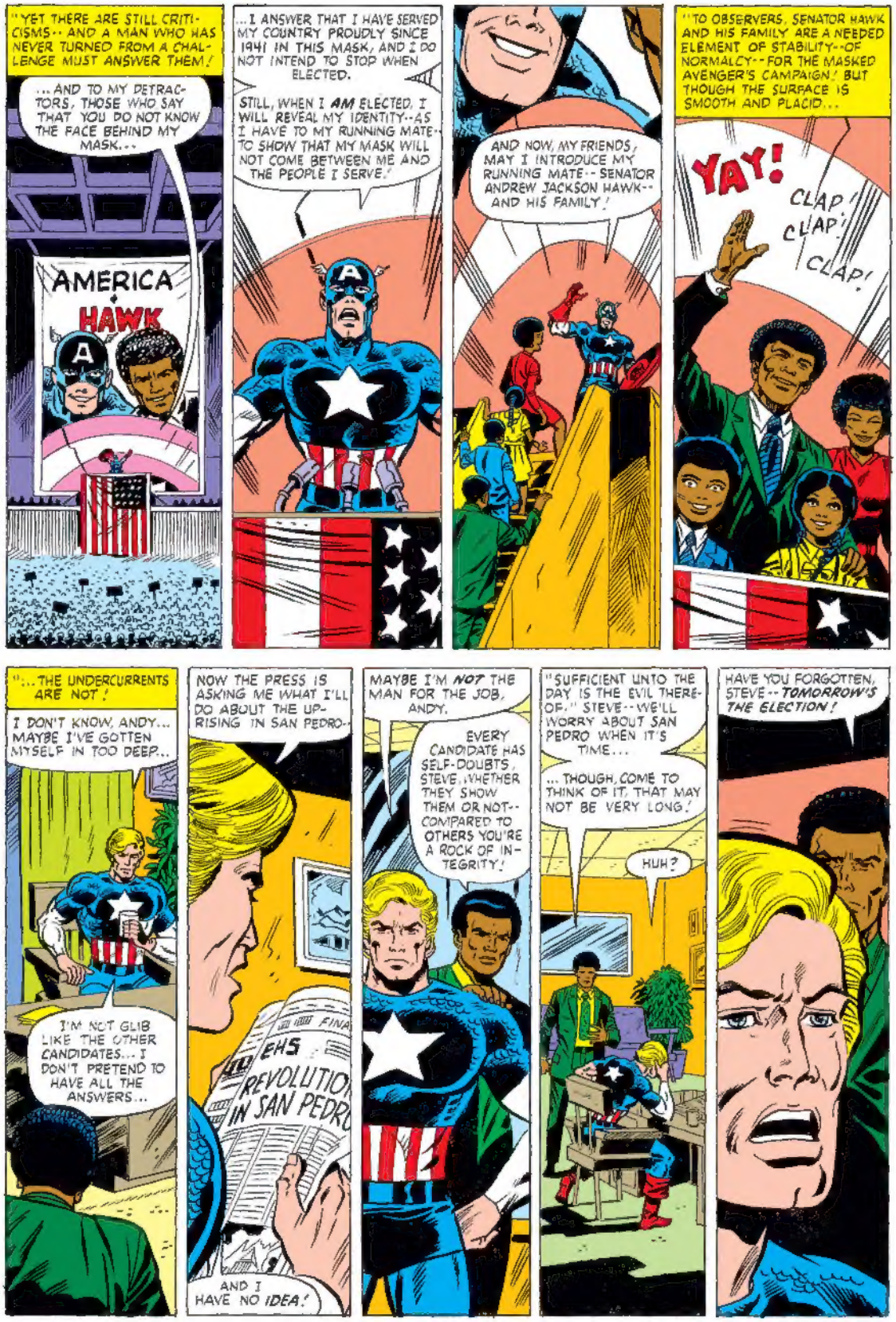
MR. REED RICHARDS, HOW DO YOU REACT TO THE NEWS THAT CAPTAIN AMERICA WILL RUN FOR THE PRESIDENCY? WILL YOU ENDORSE HIM?
SORRY, BUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR DOES NOT ENDORSE POLITICAL CANDIDATES!
HUH?
CBS

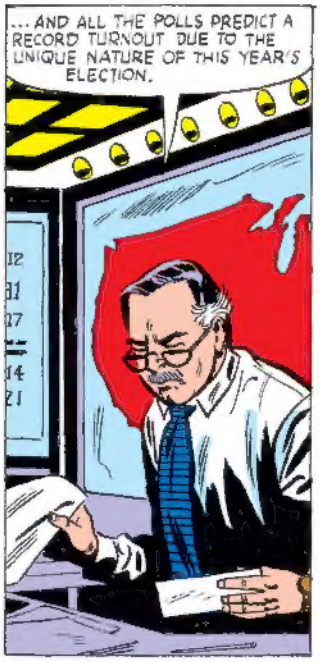
NOW HEAR THIS AMERICA-- I'M VOTIN' FER OL' WINGHEAD...
...AND ANYONE THAT DON'T LIKE IT IS A YANCY STREETER!


"AND ELSEWHERE ON THE ISLE OF MANHATTAN, IN THE OFFICES OF A GREAT METROPOLITAN NEWSPAPER...
RUN FOR PRESIDENT, WILL HE?
DAILY
I'LL SHOW 'EM! WHEN I PRINT THIS EDITORIAL, NO ONE WILL VOTE FOR A SUPER HERO! NO ONE WILL--
--BE ABLE TO STOP LAUGHING, PROBABLY!
SPIDER-MAN! GET AWAY FROM ME, YOU WALL-CRAWLING MENACE, BEFORE I--
RUMOR HAS IT THAT I'M CAP'S CHOICE FOR VICE-PRESIDENT!
BETTER BE CAREFUL HOW YOU TALK TO ME, CHUCKLES!
NOOOOO! ROBBIE, GET ME OUR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT!
"THE AMAZING SPIDER-VEEP"! I LIKE IT!
EDITOR
"BUT DESPITE THE FRIVOLITIES OF SOME, THE SELECTION OF A RUNNING MATE IS A QUESTION THAT MUST BE ANSWERED...
HOW ABOUT A MOVIE STAR? OR A SINGER?
OR--I'VE GOT IT! HOW ABOUT SOPHIA LOREN?
SHE'S NOT AN AMERICAN CITIZEN!
BUT WHO'LL CARE?
WHO THE--?
KNOCK KNOCK
I'VE GOT THE MAN YOU WANTED, CAP...

...SENATOR ANDREW JACKSON HAWK! STEP RIGHT IN, SENATOR, AND SAY--
NO!
HUH?
I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE DEALING WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA HIMSELF...
...NOT A COMMITTEE OF YES-MEN!
ARE YOU IN CHARGE HERE, CAPTAIN? IF YOU ARE, LET'S TALK--
--BUT IF YOU'RE NOT... IF YOU'RE SOME PUPPET WHO NEEDS A COMMITTEE OF BUREAUCRATS TO TELL HIM WHEN TO NOD HIS HEAD, OR WHEN TO GO TO THE JOHN...
...THEN YOU CAN COUNT ME OUT!
NO, SENATOR...
I THINK I CAN COUNT YOU IN! LET'S TALK... JUST YOU AND ME!
NOW HOLD ON, CAP! I DON'T KNOW IF WE APPROVE OF THIS MAN...
WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW DOESN'T MATTER, MISTER! MY RUNNING MATE WILL BE MY CHOICE--
--OR I WON'T RUN!
NO RECOGNITION FACTOR...NONE AT ALL.
LET'S TAKE A MEETING ON THIS, MAYBE.
HE WANTS TO MAKE HIS OWN CHOICES! WHAT KIND OF PRESIDENT IS THAT?
SLAM
VOTE ROW "C"
VOTE
A VOTE FOR CAP IS A

LET'S GO TO MY OFFICE, SENATOR... IT'S NOT MUCH, BUT IT IS PRIVATE.
I CAN TELL YOU NOW, CAPTAIN--IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A LURE TO SNAG A FEW MILLION MINORITY VOTES...
...THEN YOU CAN GET YOURSELF ANOTHER BOY--AND I DO MEAN BOY!
I WANT YOU ALL RIGHT, SENATOR, BUT NOT FOR THE REASON YOU THINK!
I THINK I CAN GET ELECTED... BUT IF A PRESIDENT CAN'T WORK WITH CONGRESS, HE MIGHT AS WELL HAVE LOST!
I LIKE YOUR VOTING RECORD, AND YOU ALSO KNOW THE WASHINGTON SCENE. I'LL NEED A PARTNER WITH THOSE QUALIFICATIONS TO MAKE UP FOR MY LACK OF EXPERIENCE!
I'M NOT OFFERING YOU A RIDE TO THE WHITE HOUSE ON THE BACK OF THE BUS--I'M LOOKING FOR A PARTNER, NOT AN ERRAND BOY!
IN THAT CASE...
...YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A RUNNING MATE--
--MR. PRESIDENT!
"SOON, ALL AMERICA IS AWARE OF THE NEW POLITICAL ALLIANCE...
CAPTAIN AMERICA
ANDREW JACKSON HAWK
AMERICA'S CHOICE FOR THE 80's
"...AND THE CAMPAIGN IS UNDERWAY!
AH HAVE NOTHING BUT PRAISE FOR CAPTAIN AMERICA'S LONG RECORD OF SERVICE TO THIS COUNTRY... BUT HE HAS NO POLITICAL EXPERIENCE...
CAPTAIN AMERICA IS ONE OF OUR COUNTRY'S GREATEST HEROES...
...BUT SHOULD WE ELECT TO THE HIGHEST OFFICE IN THE LAND, A MAN WHOSE FACE WE HAVE NEVER SEEN?
"THE CRITICISMS ARE MILD AT BEST...

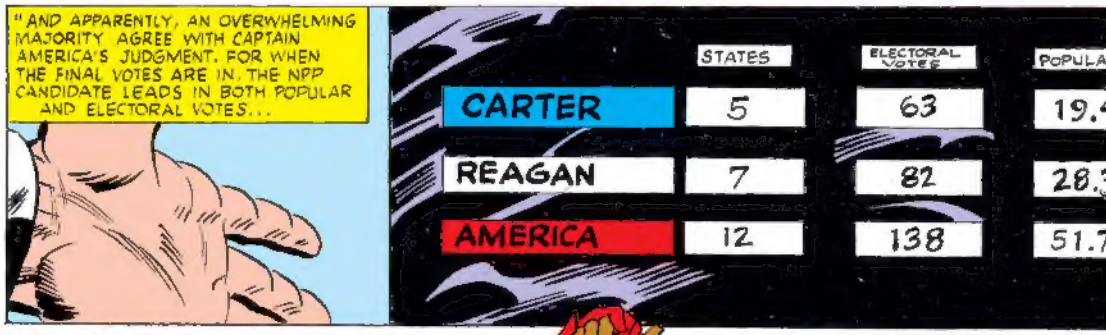

"YET THERE ARE STILL CRITICISMS-- AND A MAN WHO HAS NEVER TURNED FROM A CHALLENGE MUST ANSWER THEM!
...AND TO MY DETRACTORS, THOSE WHO SAY THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW THE FACE BEHIND MY MASK...
AMERICA
HAWK
...I ANSWER THAT I HAVE SERVED MY COUNTRY PROUDLY SINCE 1941 IN THIS MASK, AND I DO NOT INTEND TO STOP WHEN ELECTED.
STILL, WHEN I AM ELECTED, I WILL REVEAL MY IDENTITY--AS I HAVE TO MY RUNNING MATE--TO SHOW THAT MY MASK WILL NOT COME BETWEEN ME AND THE PEOPLE I SERVE!
AND NOW, MY FRIENDS, MAY I INTRODUCE MY RUNNING MATE--SENATOR ANDREW JACKSON HAWK--AND HIS FAMILY!
"TO OBSERVERS, SENATOR HAWK AND HIS FAMILY ARE A NEEDED ELEMENT OF STABILITY--OF NORMALCY--FOR THE MASKED AVENGER'S CAMPAIGN! BUT THOUGH THE SURFACE IS SMOOTH AND PLACID...
YAY!
CLAP!
CLAP!
CLAP!
"...THE UNDERCURRENTS ARE NOT!
I DON'T KNOW, ANDY... MAYBE I'VE GOTTEN MYSELF IN TOO DEEP...
I'M NOT GLIB LIKE THE OTHER CANDIDATES... I DON'T PRETEND TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS...
NOW THE PRESS IS ASKING ME WHAT I'LL DO ABOUT THE UPRISING IN SAN PEDRO--
REVOLUTION IN SAN PEDRO
AND I HAVE NO IDEA!
MAYBE I'M NOT THE MAN FOR THE JOB, ANDY.
EVERY CANDIDATE HAS SELF-DOUBTS, STEVE, WHETHER THEY SHOW THEM OR NOT--COMPARED TO OTHERS YOU'RE A ROCK OF INTEGRITY!
"SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY IS THE EVIL THEREOF," STEVE--WE'LL WORRY ABOUT SAN PEDRO WHEN IT'S TIME...
...THOUGH, COME TO THINK OF IT, THAT MAY NOT BE VERY LONG!
HUH?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN, STEVE--TOMORROW'S THE ELECTION!


...AND ALL THE POLLS PREDICT A RECORD TURNOUT DUE TO THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THIS YEAR'S ELECTION.

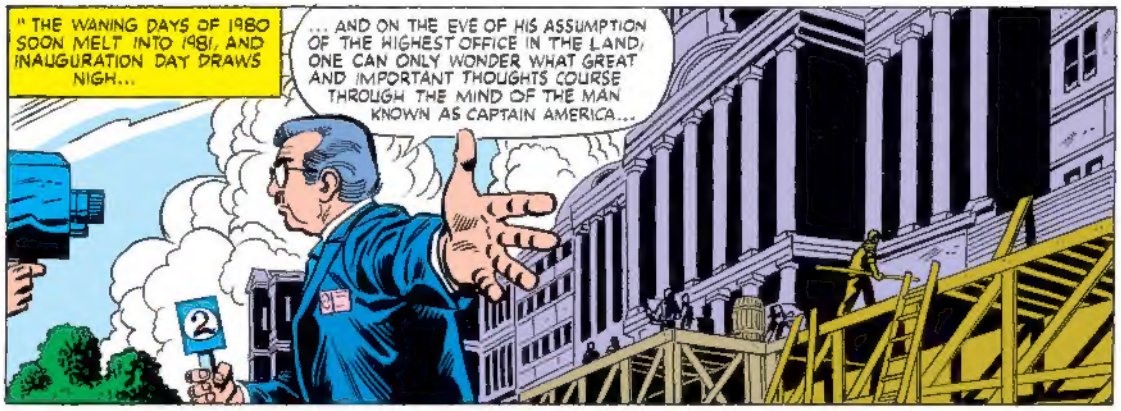
SEEN HERE IN TRADITIONAL ELECTION DAY FOOTAGE, IS PRESIDENT CARTER SHOWING UP EARLY AT THE POLLS...

...GOVERNOR REAGAN, VOTING IN HIS HOME STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ALSO SHOWED UP EARLY.

THE NPP CANDIDATE, CAPTAIN AMERICA, WAS NOT SEEN AT THE POLLS, SINCE HE PRESUMABLY VOTED IN HIS CIVILIAN IDENTITY. WHEN ASKED WHO HE VOTED FOR, HE REPLIED:
I VOTED FOR THE BEST MAN, BOYS--LET'S LEAVE IT AT THAT!
3

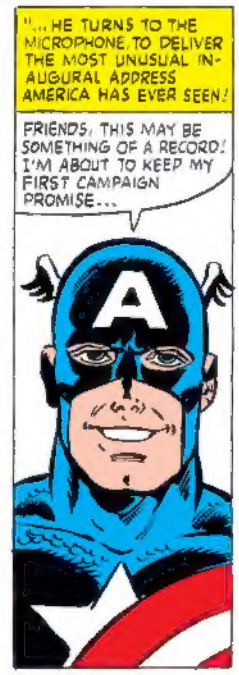

"AND APPARENTLY, AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY AGREE WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA'S JUDGMENT. FOR WHEN THE FINAL VOTES ARE IN, THE NPP CANDIDATE LEADS IN BOTH POPULAR AND ELECTORAL VOTES...
STATES
ELECTORAL VOTES
POPULAR
CARTER 5 63 19.4
REAGAN 7 82 28.3
AMERICA 12 138 51.7

"AND AMERICA HAS A NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE--PERHAPS THE MOST UNUSUAL, CERTAINLY THE MOST SYMBOLIC, OF HER 204 YEARS.'

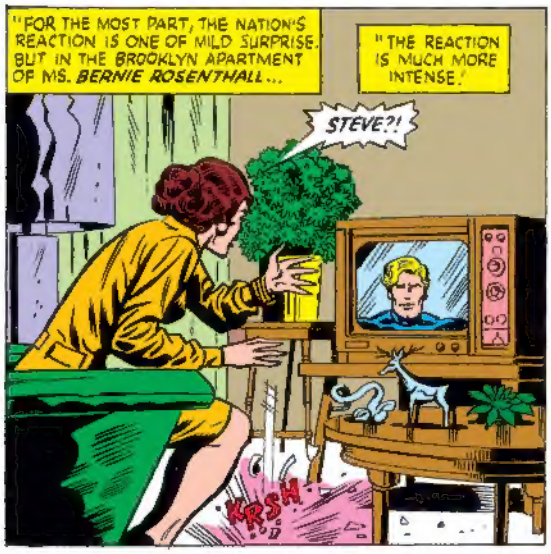

"THE WANING DAYS OF 1980 SOON MELT INTO 1981, AND INAUGURATION DAY DRAWS NIGH...
... AND ON THE EVE OF HIS ASSUMPTION OF THE HIGHEST OFFICE IN THE LAND, ONE CAN ONLY WONDER WHAT GREAT AND IMPORTANT THOUGHTS COURSE THROUGH THE MIND OF THE MAN KNOWN AS CAPTAIN AMERICA...

IF I DON'T GET THESE DRAWINGS IN THE MAIL BEFORE MORNING, MY EDITOR'LL HAVE MY HEAD...
... PRESIDENT OR NO PRESIDENT!

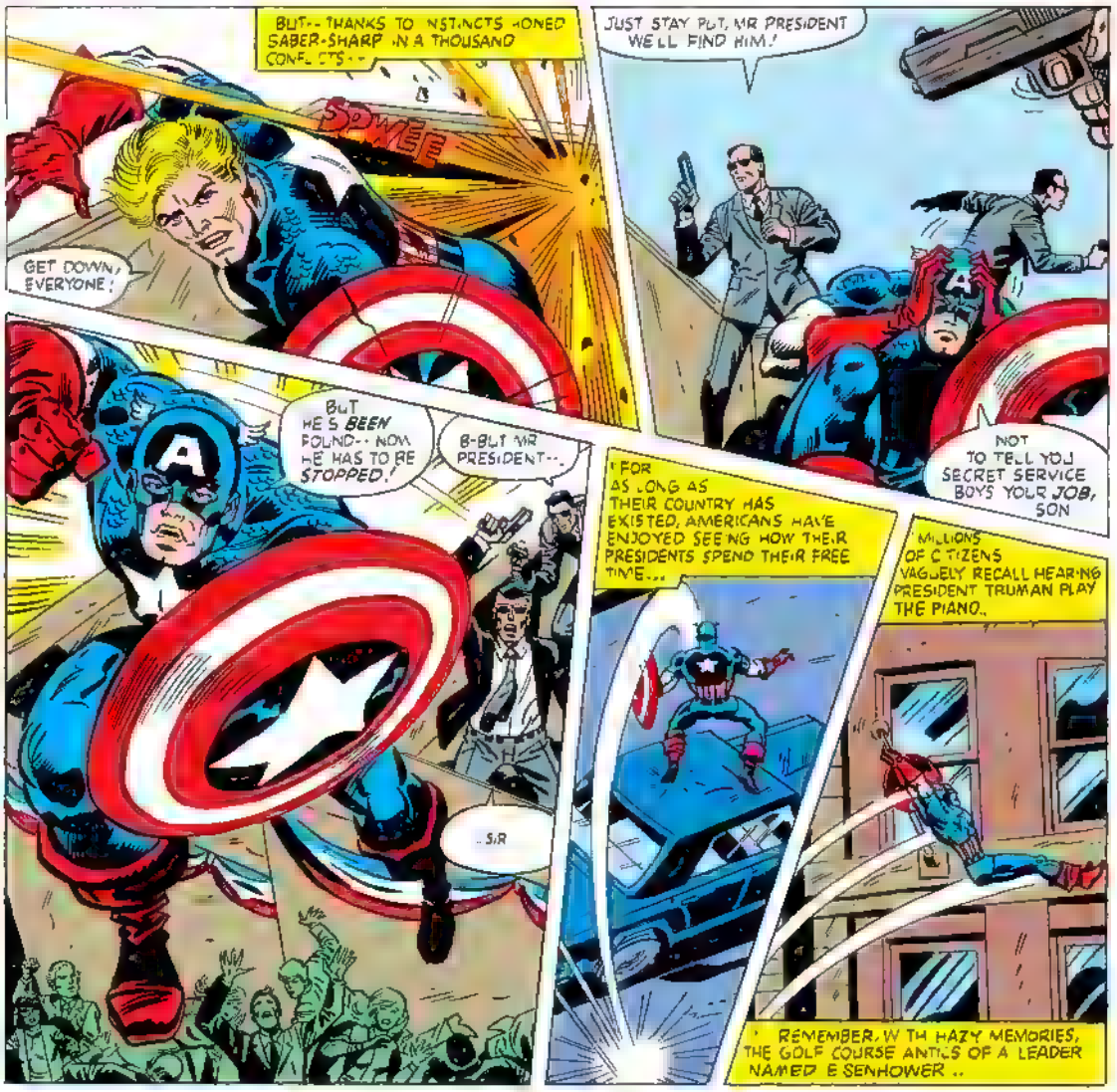
"AND THE NEXT DAY, WHEN A SOLEMN OATH HAS BEEN ADMINISTERED, WHEN CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS SWORN TO CARRY OUT HIS DUTIES AS PRESIDENT TO HIS DYING BREATH, IF NECESSARY...


"... HE TURNS TO THE MICROPHONE TO DELIVER THE MOST UNUSUAL INAUGURAL ADDRESS AMERICA HAS EVER SEEN!
FRIENDS, THIS MAY BE SOMETHING OF A RECORD! I'M ABOUT TO KEEP MY FIRST CAMPAIGN PROMISE...

... BY REVEALING MY IDENTITY!
MY NAME IS ROGERS... STEVE ROGERS.


"FOR THE MOST PART, THE NATION'S REACTION IS ONE OF MILD SURPRISE. BUT IN THE BROOKLYN APARTMENT OF MS. BERNIE ROSENTHALL...
"THE REACTION IS MUCH MORE INTENSE!
STEVE?!
KRSH

"YET STILL MORE INTENSE IS THE REACTION OF THOSE WHOSE ONLY MEANS OF EXPRESSING DISSATISFACTION IS VIOLENCE!
NO ONE PAYS ANY ATTENTION TO ME... EVEN KNOWS I'M ALIVE! BUT THEY WILL-- SOON AS I PULL THE TRIGGER!

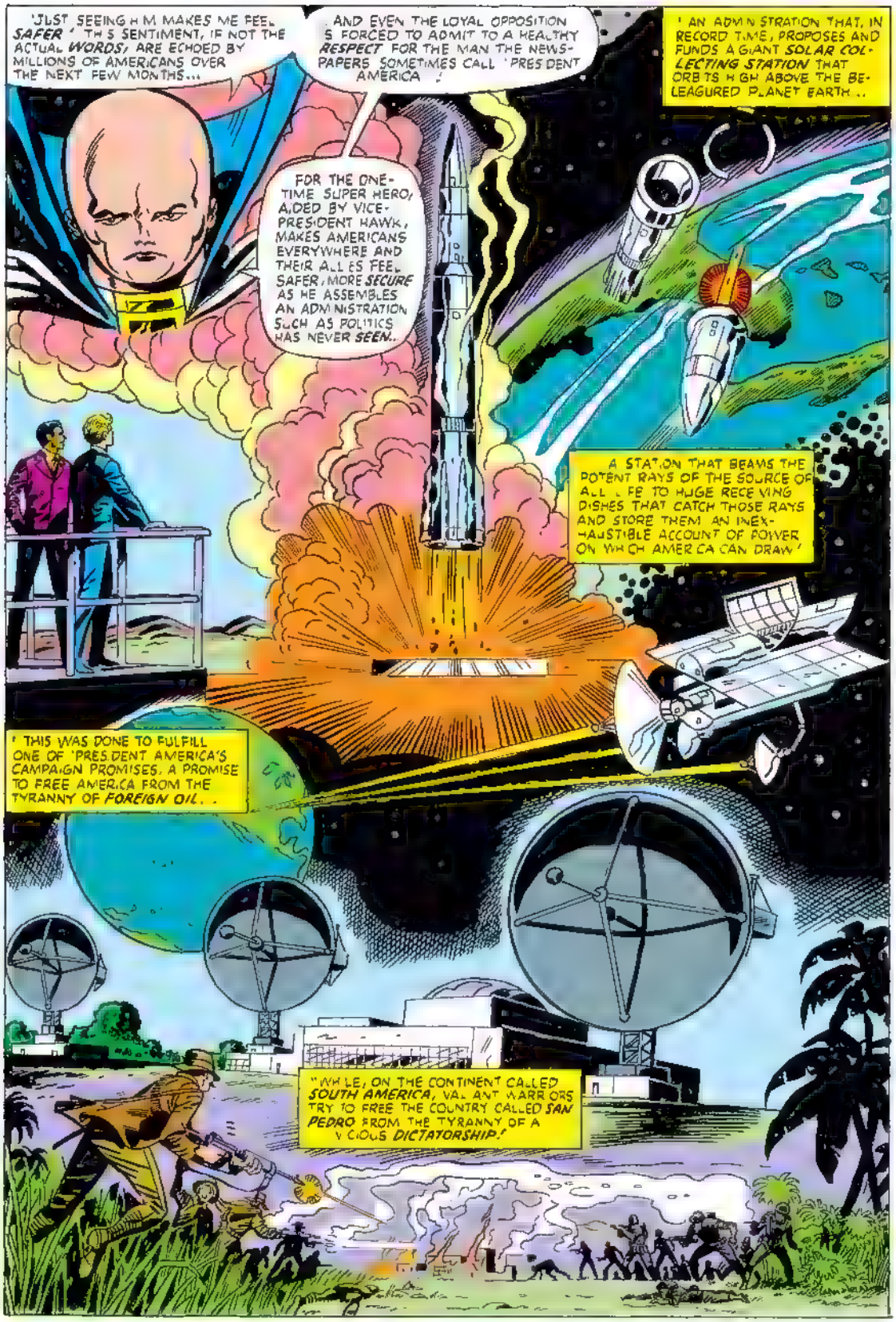

BUT-- THANKS TO INSTINCTS HONED SABER-SHARP IN A THOUSAND CONFLICTS--
SPWEE
GET DOWN, EVERYONE!
JUST STAY PUT, MR PRESIDENT WE'LL FIND HIM!
BUT HE'S BEEN FOUND-- NOW HE HAS TO BE STOPPED!
B-BUT MR PRESIDENT--
..SIR
NOT TO TELL YOU SECRET SERVICE BOYS YOUR JOB, SON
FOR AS LONG AS THEIR COUNTRY HAS EXISTED, AMERICANS HAVE ENJOYED SEEING HOW THEIR PRESIDENTS SPEND THEIR FREE TIME...
MILLIONS OF CITIZENS VAGUELY RECALL HEARING PRESIDENT TRUMAN PLAY THE PIANO..
REMEMBER, WITH HAZY MEMORIES, THE GOLF COURSE ANTICS OF A LEADER NAMED EISENHOWER ..

"THIS IS A SCENE THAT WILL REMAIN SHARPLY ETCHED IN THEIR MINDS TILL THEIR DYING DAYS!
LR-ASH

MOVE IT YOU GUYS. IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO THE PRESIDENT .

NO NEED TO WORRY BOYS! BUT I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D TAKE HIM OFF MY HANDS I'VE GOT A SPEECH TO DELIVER!
CERTAINLY SIR...!

AND WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE GUARDING HIM?
YEAH. BUT JUST SEEING HIM MAKES ME FEEL...SAFER SOMEHOW. Y KNOW?


'JUST SEEING HIM MAKES ME FEEL *SAFER*.' THIS SENTIMENT, IF NOT THE ACTUAL *WORDS*, ARE ECHOED BY MILLIONS OF AMERICANS OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS...
AND EVEN THE LOYAL OPPOSITION IS FORCED TO ADMIT TO A HEALTHY *RESPECT* FOR THE MAN THE NEWSPAPERS SOMETIMES CALL 'PRESIDENT AMERICA'!
FOR THE ONE-TIME SUPER HERO, AIDED BY VICE-PRESIDENT HAWK, MAKES AMERICANS EVERYWHERE AND THEIR ALLIES FEEL SAFER, MORE *SECURE* AS HE ASSEMBLES AN ADMINISTRATION SUCH AS POLITICS HAS NEVER *SEEN*..
'AN ADMINISTRATION THAT, IN RECORD TIME, PROPOSES AND FUNDS A GIANT *SOLAR COLLECTING STATION* THAT ORBITS HIGH ABOVE THE BELEAGURED PLANET EARTH..
A STATION THAT BEAMS THE POTENT RAYS OF THE SOURCE OF ALL LIFE TO HUGE RECEIVING DISHES THAT CATCH THOSE RAYS AND STORE THEM AN INEXHAUSTIBLE ACCOUNT OF POWER ON WHICH AMERICA CAN DRAW'
'THIS WAS DONE TO FULFILL ONE OF 'PRESIDENT AMERICA'S CAMPAIGN PROMISES, A PROMISE TO FREE AMERICA FROM THE TYRANNY OF *FOREIGN OIL*..
"WHILE, ON THE CONTINENT CALLED *SOUTH AMERICA*, VALIANT WARRIORS TRY TO FREE THE COUNTRY CALLED *SAN PEDRO* FROM THE TYRANNY OF A VICIOUS *DICTATORSHIP*!

"OUTNUMBERED, THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS HAVE APPEALED TO A COUNTRY *FOUNDED* BY OUTNUMBERED FREEDOM FIGHTERS FOR TROOPS AND WEAPONS AND SOON THE CONTROVERSY REACHES THE MAN AT TOP!"

"...AND I HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND *AID* THE REVOLUTIONARIES IN SAN PEDRO! ANY QUESTIONS, GENTLEMEN?"

YES, MISTER TRASK?

MY READERS CARE ABOUT THE COUNTRY OF SAN PEDRO, MR. PRESIDENT.

...BUT THEY CARE EVEN MORE THAT THEY'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE TO SEND THEIR SONS TO ANOTHER *VIETNAM!* CAN YOU GUARANTEE WE WON'T BE STUCK IN A "POLICE ACTION" FOR YEARS?

I BELIEVE I *CAN*, MR. TRASK, BECAUSE I'M SENDING THE REVOLUTIONARIES ONLY SOLAR POWERED WEAPONS, WEAPONS THAT WORK ON THE SAME PRINCIPLE AS THE SOLAR COLLECTING STATION!

A FEW ADVISORS WILL BE SENT TO TEACH THE PROPER USE OF THE WEAPONS...

BUT NOT *ONE* AMERICAN SOLDIER WILL SET FOOT IN SAN PEDRO! I'VE SEEN A WAR OR TWO IN MY TIME, AND I WOULDN'T SEND ANY SOLDIER TO FIGHT A WAR...

THAT I WOULDN'T FIGHT IN *MYSELF!*

"AND IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME, THE OUTNUMBERED, ILL-EQUIPPED LIBERATORS OF SAN PEDRO HAVE TRIUMPHED!"

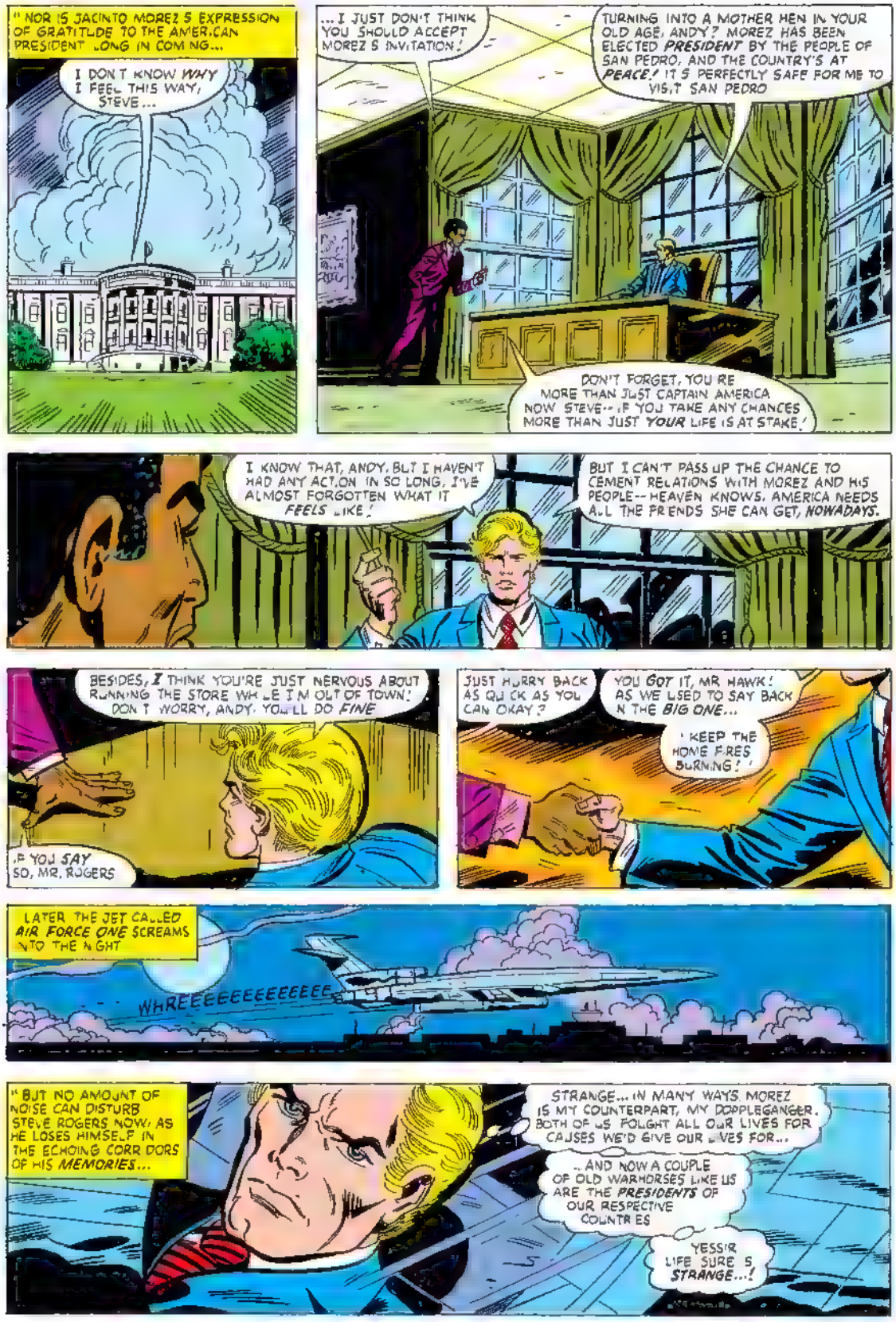
"PART OF THE CREDIT MUST CERTAINLY GO TO THE POWERFUL SOLAR-POWERED WEAPONS WHICH ENABLED THE REVOLUTIONARIES TO TURN THE TIDE OF BATTLE..

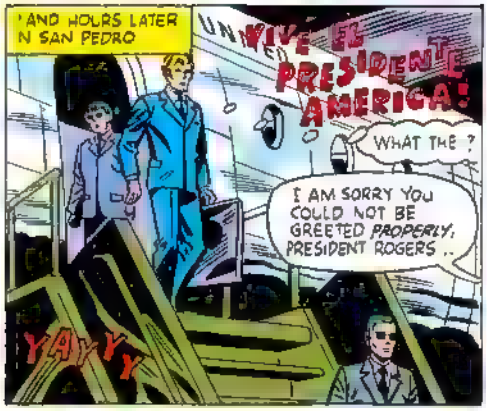
"BUT SOLDIERS WILL NOT FIGHT WITHOUT A LEADER - AND GUERILLA PHILOSOPHER *JACINTO MOREZ*, A VALIANT VOICE IN SOUTH AMERICAN POLITICS FOR YEARS, A MAN THOUGHT *DEAD*...

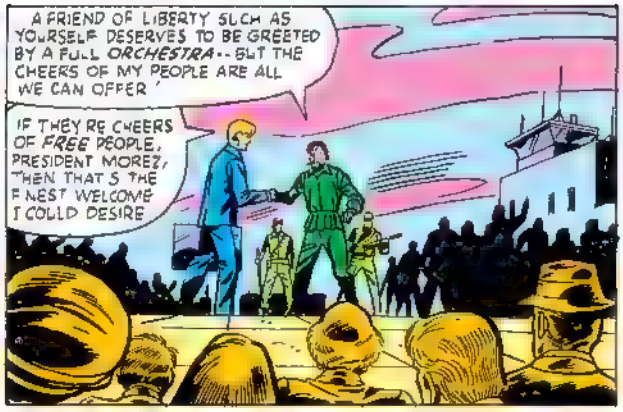
"HAS RETURNED ONCE AGAIN, ESCAPING A DICTATOR'S PRISON OR THE COLD CLUTCH OF DEATH ITSELF, TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE TO *VICTORY!*"

...AND WE PROCLAIM THE REPUBLIC OF SAN PEDRO A *FREE DEMOCRACY* ONCE AGAIN.

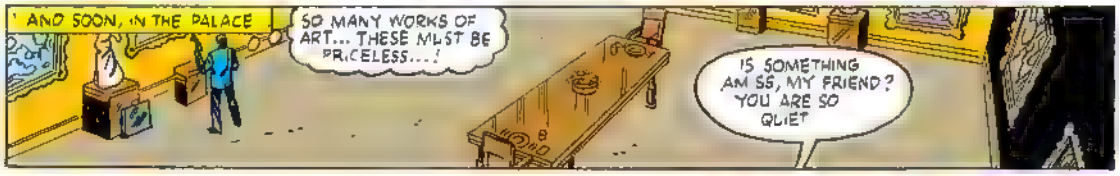
YAYYYYYYY


" NOR IS JACINTO MOREZ'S EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE TO THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT LONG IN COMING...
I DON'T KNOW WHY I FEEL THIS WAY, STEVE...
...I JUST DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD ACCEPT MOREZ'S INVITATION!
TURNING INTO A MOTHER HEN IN YOUR OLD AGE, ANDY? MOREZ HAS BEEN ELECTED PRESIDENT BY THE PEOPLE OF SAN PEDRO, AND THE COUNTRY'S AT PEACE! IT'S PERFECTLY SAFE FOR ME TO VISIT SAN PEDRO
DON'T FORGET, YOU'RE MORE THAN JUST CAPTAIN AMERICA NOW, STEVE--IF YOU TAKE ANY CHANCES MORE THAN JUST YOUR LIFE IS AT STAKE!
I KNOW THAT, ANDY, BUT I HAVEN'T HAD ANY ACTION IN SO LONG, I'VE ALMOST FORGOTTEN WHAT IT FEELS LIKE!
BUT I CAN'T PASS UP THE CHANCE TO CEMENT RELATIONS WITH MOREZ AND HIS PEOPLE--HEAVEN KNOWS, AMERICA NEEDS ALL THE FRIENDS SHE CAN GET, NOWADAYS.
BESIDES, I THINK YOU'RE JUST NERVOUS ABOUT RUNNING THE STORE WHILE I'M OUT OF TOWN! DON'T WORRY, ANDY. YOU'LL DO FINE
IF YOU SAY SO, MR. ROGERS
JUST HURRY BACK AS QUICK AS YOU CAN, OKAY?
YOU GOT IT, MR. HAWK! AS WE USED TO SAY BACK IN THE BIG ONE...
"KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING!"
LATER, THE JET CALLED AIR FORCE ONE SCREAMS INTO THE NIGHT
WHREEEEEEEEEEEEEE
" BUT NO AMOUNT OF NOISE CAN DISTURB STEVE ROGERS NOW, AS HE LOSES HIMSELF IN THE ECHOING CORRIDORS OF HIS MEMORIES...
STRANGE... IN MANY WAYS, MOREZ IS MY COUNTERPART, MY DOPPLEGANGER. BOTH OF US FOUGHT ALL OUR LIVES FOR CAUSES WE'D GIVE OUR LIVES FOR...
...AND NOW A COUPLE OF OLD WARHORSES LIKE US ARE THE PRESIDENTS OF OUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES
YESSIR, LIFE SURE IS STRANGE...!


AND HOURS LATER IN SAN PEDRO
VIVE EL PRESIDENTE AMERICA!
WHAT THE ?
I AM SORRY YOU COULD NOT BE GREETED PROPERLY, PRESIDENT ROGERS ..
YAY YY


A FRIEND OF LIBERTY SUCH AS YOURSELF DESERVES TO BE GREETED BY A FULL ORCHESTRA -- BUT THE CHEERS OF MY PEOPLE ARE ALL WE CAN OFFER !
IF THEY'RE CHEERS OF FREE PEOPLE, PRESIDENT MOREZ, THEN THAT'S THE FINEST WELCOME I COULD DESIRE

WELL SPOKEN PRESIDENT ROGERS.
PLEASE.. THE NAME IS STEVE.
VERY WELL.. STEVE MY FRIENDS CALL ME JACINTO.


AND SOON, IN THE PALACE
SO MANY WORKS OF ART... THESE MUST BE PRICELESS...!
IS SOMETHING AMISS, MY FRIEND? YOU ARE SO QUIET

NOTHING, JACINTO... I WAS JUST WONDERING .. YOUR PEOPLE ARE SO POOR...

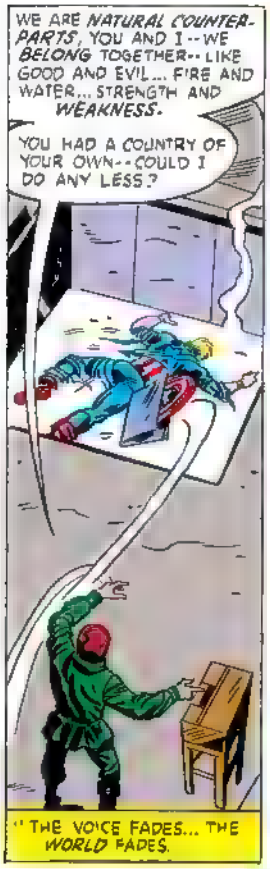
... YET YOU HAVE SO MANY TREASURES HERE -- SURELY THEY COULD BE SOLD, THE MONEY USED TO ALLEVIATE YOUR COUNTRY'S SUFFERING!
BUT WHY SHOULD THE MIGHTY AID THE LOW--

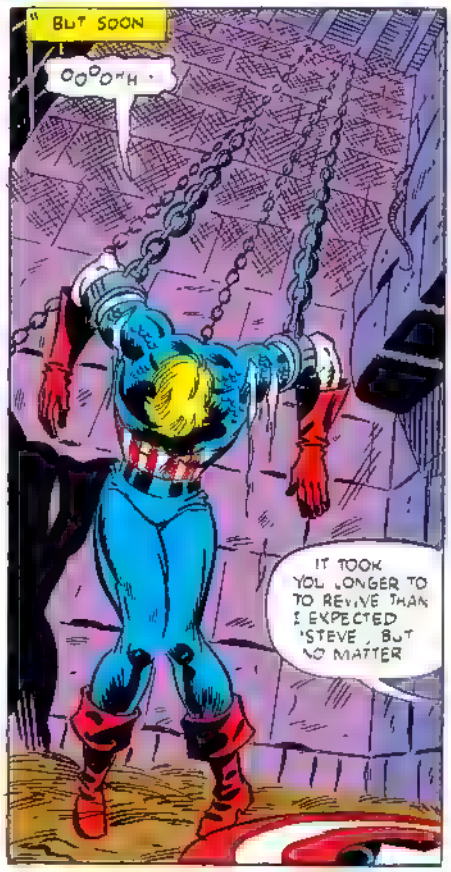
-- WHEN IT IS THE LOT OF THE LOWLY TO SERVE?
WHAT? I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT -- YOU?

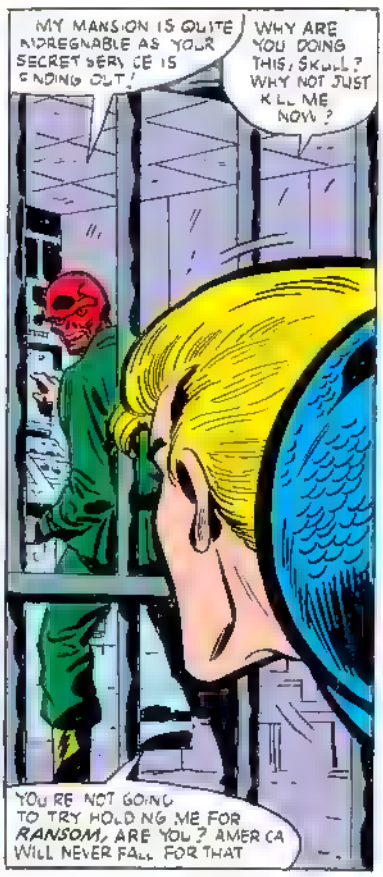
THE RED SKULL!
YES, "MY FRIEND STEVE"! YOU TRUSTING FOOL!

THE REAL MOREZ WAS AS GULLIBLE AS YOU.. IT WAS CHILD'S PLAY TO DELETE HIM, AND TAKE HIS PLACE-- AFTER I FOUND HIM!
BUT WHY, SKULL? WHY THIS CHARADE?

UNHHH
REALLY DEAR STEVE, I THOUGHT YOU WOULD HAVE GUESSED
CRRZZZZ


WE ARE NATURAL COUNTERPARTS, YOU AND I--WE BELONG TOGETHER-- LIKE GOOD AND EVIL... FIRE AND WATER... STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.
YOU HAD A COUNTRY OF YOUR OWN--COULD I DO ANY LESS?
"THE VOICE FADES... THE WORLD FADES.

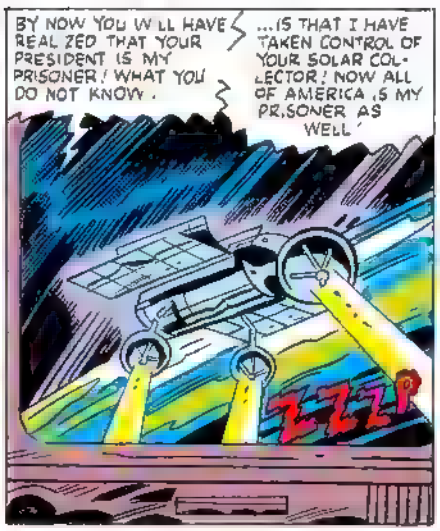

"BUT SOON
OOOOHH
IT TOOK YOU LONGER TO TO REVIVE THAN I EXPECTED STEVE, BUT NO MATTER

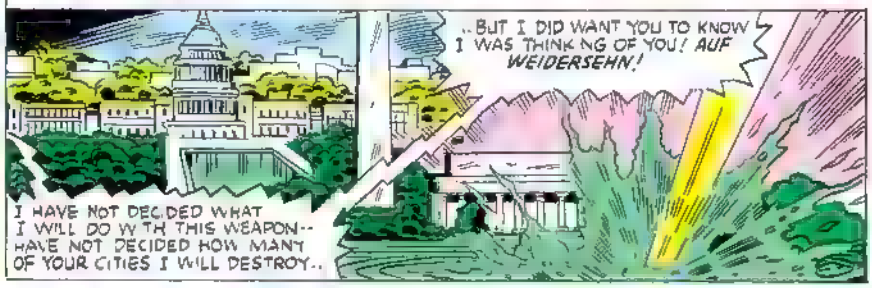

MY MANSION IS QUITE IMPREGNABLE AS YOUR SECRET SERVICE IS FINDING OUT!
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS, SKULL? WHY NOT JUST KILL ME NOW?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TRY HOLDING ME FOR RANSOM, ARE YOU? AMERICA WILL NEVER FALL FOR THAT

OF COURSE NOT, DEAR CAPTAIN, BUT... AS CAPTAIN AMERICA YOU WERE MERELY A SYMBOL OF YOUR COUNTRY...
AS PRESIDENT ROGERS, YOU ARE THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF IT! WHEN YOUR COUNTRYMEN SEE YOU SHACKLED, THEIR WILL TO RESIST WILL BE SEVERELY WEAKENED!
IT IS AN OLD PLAN BUT THE OLDEST PLANS ARE OFTEN THE MOST RELIABLE...
AS THE FUHRER ONCE REMARKED TO ME.
KLIK

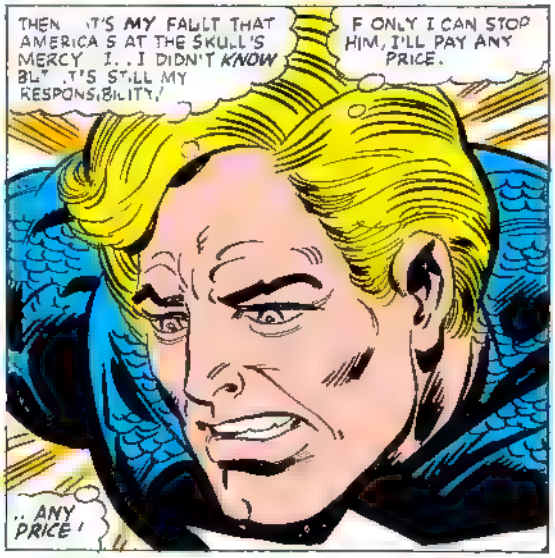
"AND IMMEDIATELY, ALL OVER THE CONTINENT OF NORTH AMERICA...
HEY, THE TV'S OUT!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PICTURE?
WHO'S THAT GUY WITH THE RED FACE?

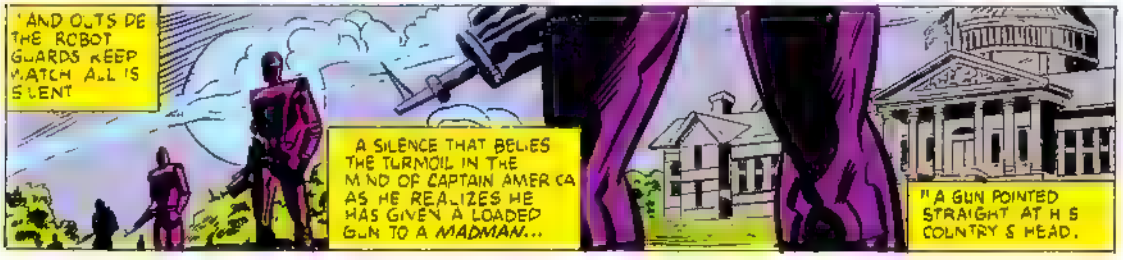
GOOD EVENING, PEOPLES OF AMERICA! I AM THE RED SKULL... PERHAPS YOU RECOGNIZE THE FIGURE BEHIND ME!
IT-IT'S PRESIDENT ROGERS...!


BY NOW YOU WILL HAVE REALIZED THAT YOUR PRESIDENT IS MY PRISONER! WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW...
...IS THAT I HAVE TAKEN CONTROL OF YOUR SOLAR COLLECTOR! NOW ALL OF AMERICA IS MY PRISONER AS WELL!
ZZZZP

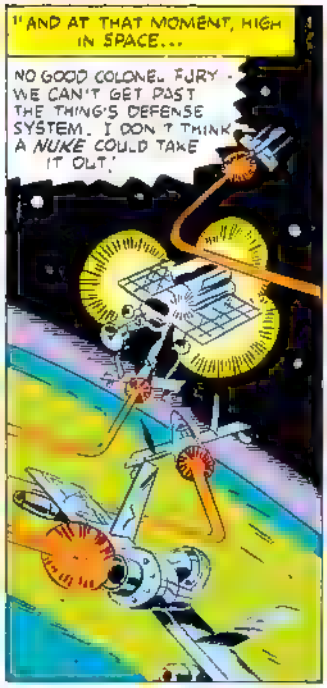

I HAVE NOT DECIDED WHAT I WILL DO WITH THIS WEAPON-- HAVE NOT DECIDED HOW MANY OF YOUR CITIES I WILL DESTROY..
..BUT I DID WANT YOU TO KNOW I WAS THINKING OF YOU! AUF WEIDERSEHN!

PERHAPS MR PRESIDENT, IN MY NEXT BROADCAST I SHALL TELL THEM THAT I WAS ABLE TO OVERRIDE THE SOLAR COLLECTOR BY ANALYZING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SOLAR WEAPONS.
..THAT YOU SO GRACIOUSLY SENT THE TROOPS OF SAN PEDRO!
WHAT?


THEN IT'S MY FAULT THAT AMERICA IS AT THE SKULL'S MERCY I..I DIDN'T KNOW BUT IT'S STILL MY RESPONSIBILITY!
IF ONLY I CAN STOP HIM, I'LL PAY ANY PRICE.
..ANY PRICE!

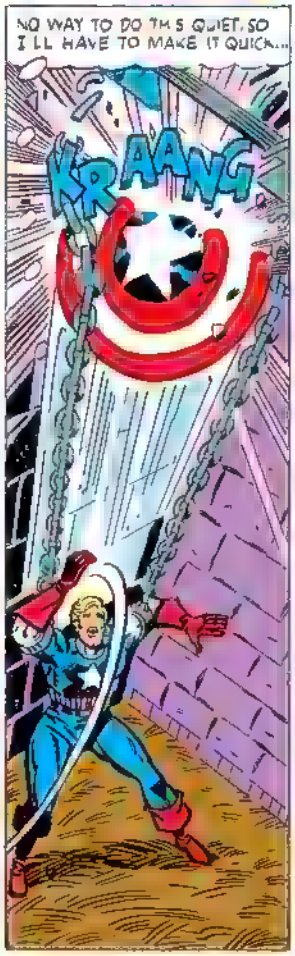

AND OUTSIDE THE ROBOT GUARDS KEEP WATCH ALL IS SILENT
A SILENCE THAT BELIES THE TURMOIL IN THE MIND OF CAPTAIN AMERICA AS HE REALIZES HE HAS GIVEN A LOADED GUN TO A MADMAN...
"A GUN POINTED STRAIGHT AT HIS COUNTRY'S HEAD.

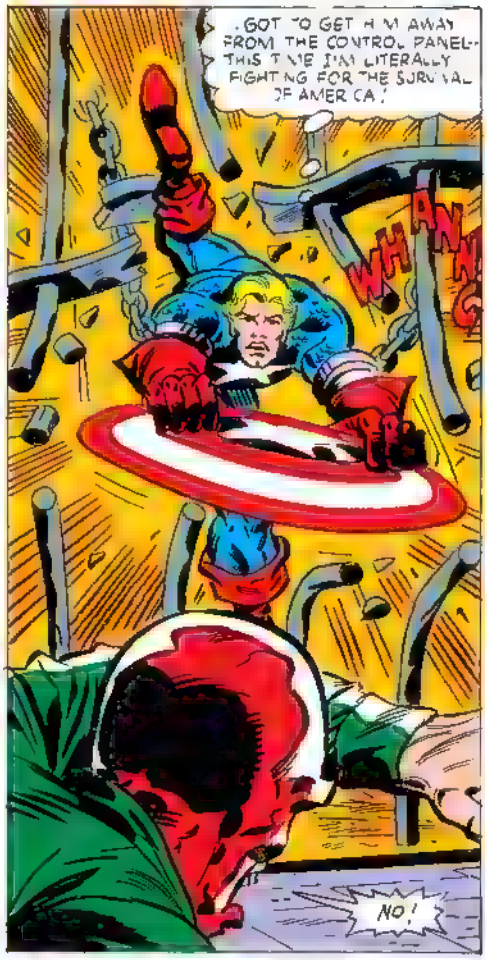
AND NOT LONG AFTER...
GOOD EVENING, PEOPLES OF AMERICA! IT MAY INTEREST YOU TO KNOW THAT I HAVE DECIDED ON A STRATEGY...
DO YOU NOT THINK IT WOULD BE FITTING IF THE ONLY REMAINING MEMBER OF THE THIRD REICH WAS TO DESTROY AMERICA.. BEGINNING WITH HER CAPITAL CITY?
NO! HE'S REALLY GONNA DO IT


AND AT THAT MOMENT, HIGH IN SPACE...
NO GOOD COLONEL FURY - WE CAN'T GET PAST THE THING'S DEFENSE SYSTEM. I DON'T THINK A NUKE COULD TAKE IT OUT!

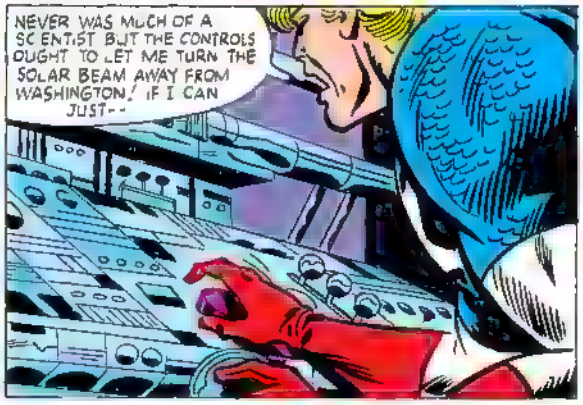
ALL RIGHT GET BACK DOWNSTAIRS! BUT DON'T LAND AT WASHINGTON-- THEY NEED ALL AVAILABLE AIR SPACE FOR EVACUATION!
BUT IT WON'T BE ENOUGH. AIN'T NO WAY TO EMPTY A CITY IN TIME MAYBE THE SKULL'S FINALLY WON!

DIDN'T FINALLY REACHED MY SHIELD! THE SKULL'S BEEN SO BUSY TALKING HE HASN'T EVEN HEARD ME!
YOU MISUNDERSTAND, MR. HAWK - I DO NOT FEAR RETALIATION - YOU ARE HELPLESS!
BESIDES I DO NOT DEAL WITH INFERIORS! RED SKULL OUT.


NO WAY TO DO THIS QUIET, SO I'LL HAVE TO MAKE IT QUICK...
KRAANG


GOT TO GET HIM AWAY FROM THE CONTROL PANEL-- THIS TIME I'M LITERALLY FIGHTING FOR THE SURVIVAL OF AMERICA!
WHANNG
NO!

GET AWAY FROM THERE SKULL-- NOW!
NEIN! YOU W LL NOT--JHHHH.


NEVER WAS MUCH OF A SC ENTIST BUT THE CONTROLS OUGHT TO LET ME TURN THE SOLAR BEAM AWAY FROM WASHINGTON! IF I CAN JUST--

MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING WRONG-- THE PANEL S OVER-LOADING!
BUT DID IT WORK? DID I SAVE WASH-INGTON?

" AND HUNDREDS OF M LES ON SPACE, THE SOLAR STATIONS TURN SLOWLY, L KE A CH'D, REDUCTANT TO OBEY...
" BUT IT TURNS ALL THE SAME.

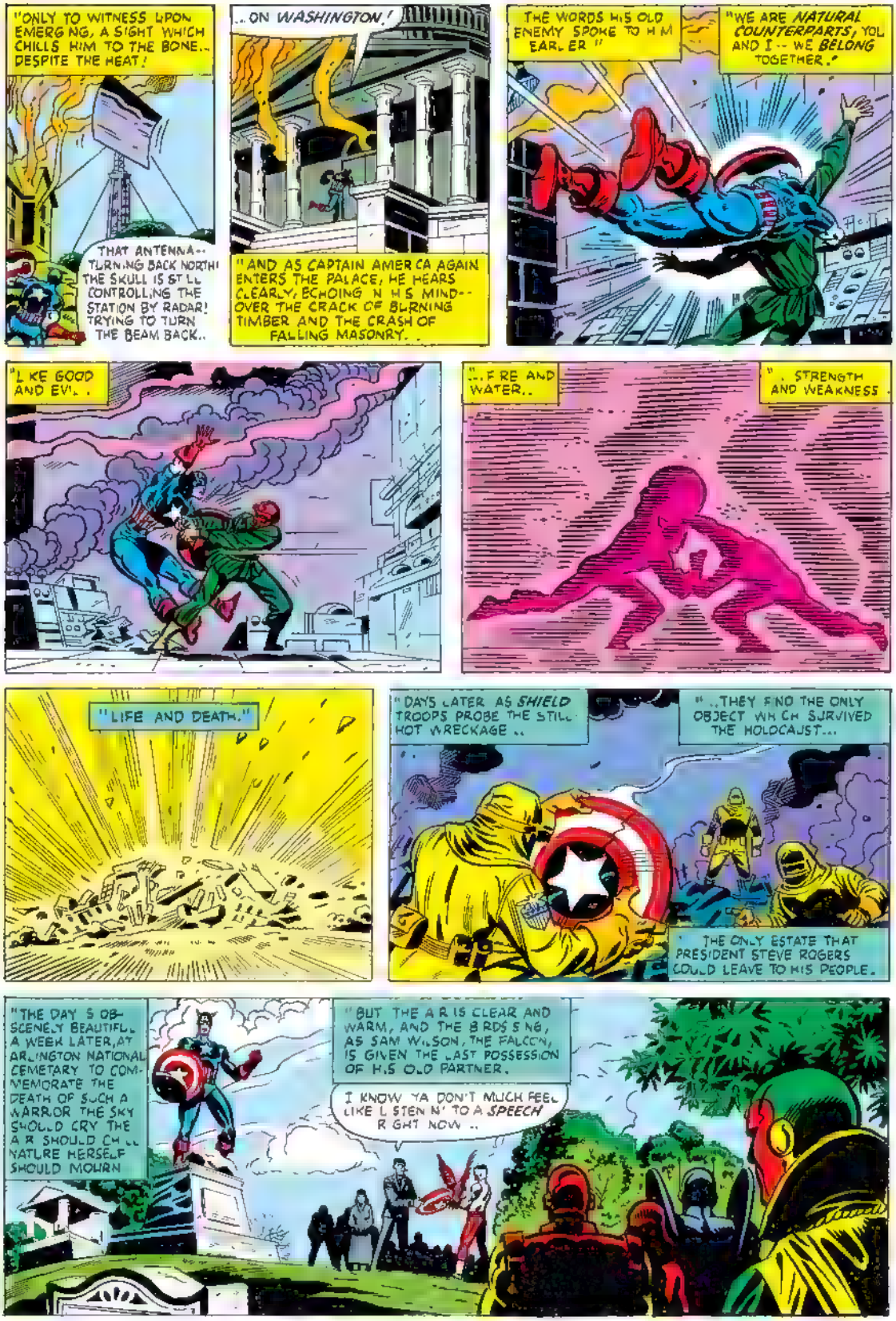
NEIN, YOU FOOL! DO YOU NOT KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE DONE? YOU HAVE DEFLECTED THE BEAM FROM WASHINGTON--

--BUT THE OVER-LOADED SYSTEM WILL TREAT YOUR COM-MAND AS A HOMING SIGNAL--
WHOOOSH
--AND INCINERATE US ALL I MUST REDIRECT IT, WHILE THERE IS STILL--

FORGET IT SKULL-- YOU'RE THROUGH...AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, YOU RE FINISHED!
OOOW I FELT THAT- I AM OUT OF SHAPE!

SKULL, WE VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! SKULL?
NO ANSWER AND I CAN T SEE HIM FOR ALL THE SMOKE! MAYBE HE'LL ESCAPE ON HIS OWN

BUT IF HE WERE TO DIE HERE, IN THIS UNDERGROUND BUNKER I DON'T THINK I--OR HISTORY WOULD MIND!
" HIS SPEED ONLY SLIGHTLY IMPAIRED BY ACHING MUSCLES CAPTAIN AMER CA RACES ALONG AN UNDER-GROUND CORRIDOR


"ONLY TO WITNESS UPON EMERG NG, A SIGHT WHICH CHILLS HIM TO THE BONE.. DESPITE THE HEAT!
THAT ANTENNA-- TURN NG BACK NORTH! THE SKULL IS ST LL CONTROLLING THE STATION BY RADAR! TRYING TO TURN THE BEAM BACK..
..ON WASHINGTON!
"AND AS CAPTAIN AMER CA AGAIN ENTERS THE PALACE, HE HEARS CLEARLY, ECHOING N HIS MIND-- OVER THE CRACK OF BURNING TIMBER AND THE CRASH OF FALLING MASONRY. .
THE WORDS HIS OLD ENEMY SPOKE TO H M EARL ER "
"WE ARE NATURAL COUNTERPARTS, YOU AND I -- WE BELONG TOGETHER."
"L KE GOOD AND EVI. .
..F RE AND WATER..
. STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS .
"LIFE AND DEATH."
"DAYS LATER AS SHIELD TROOPS PROBE THE STILL HOT WRECKAGE ..
"..THEY FIND THE ONLY OBJECT WH CH SURVIVED THE HOLOCAUST...
THE ONLY ESTATE THAT PRESIDENT STEVE ROGERS COULD LEAVE TO HIS PEOPLE.
"THE DAY S OBSCENELY BEAUTIFUL A WEEK LATER, AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETARY TO COMMEMORATE THE DEATH OF SUCH A WARRIOR THE SKY SHOULD CRY THE A R SHOULD CH LL NATURE HERSELF SHOULD MOURN
"BUT THE A R IS CLEAR AND WARM, AND THE B RDS S NG, AS SAM WILSON, THE FALCON, IS GIVEN THE LAST POSSESSION OF H S OLD PARTNER.
I KNOW YA DON'T MUCH FEEL LIKE L STEN N' TO A SPEECH R GHT NOW ..

BUT DO NOT MOURN FOR HIM RATHER MOURN FOR *AMERICA*, A COUNTRY BEREFT OF HER GREATEST CHAMPION...

MOURN FOR US ALL... BUT SEE THAT HIS DEATH WAS NOT IN VAIN

I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the course,
I have kept the faith.
--2 Timothy, 4:7

THE END.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: A STUNNING SAGA OF AN ALTERNATE REALITY!
WHAT IF ... THE MAN-THING HAD REGAINED TED SALLIS' BRAIN?
I AM THE WATCHER... AND I INVITE YOU TO REVISIT THIS FATEFUL OCCURRENCE. DUPED BY AGENTS OF A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT, DR KARL OHEIMER--A BRILLIANT SCIENTIST--IS ENGAGED IN A PROJECT THAT WILL GIVE BACK TO THE MONSTROUS MAN-THING THE MIND AND MEMORIES OF HIS FORMER SELF, TED SALLIS, THE ONLY MAN WHO HOLDS THE SECRET OF A SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM..
THE PROJECT IS DOOMED TO FAILURE, HOWEVER--FOR U.S. SOLDIERS, DETERMINED TO STOP IT, BURST UPON THE SCENE. IN THAT CHAOS OF DESTRUCTION, OHEIMER IS ACCIDENTALLY KILLED--AND WITH HIM DIES ALL HOPE OF RESURRECTING THE MIND OF TED SALLIS!
YET. . WHAT IF DR OHEIMER HAD NOT DIED THAT DAY? WHAT IF HIS PROJECT HAD SUCCEEDED?
STEVEN GRANT, WRITER
HERB TRIMPE, PENCILER
BOB WIACEK, INKER
PAUL MIGBEE, LETTERER
N. DOWE DSWELL COLORIST
* AS SEEN IN THE RECENT MAN-THING #1--DENNY

I SENSE THAT SOME OF YOU ARE *NOT* FAMILIAR WITH THE MAN-THING!

HIS STORY BEGINS IN THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES, WHERE BIO-CHEMIST TED SALLIS SET UP HIS LABORATORY...

"BY DISCOVERING THE SUPER SOLDIER FORMULA, SALLIS MADE HIMSELF THE TARGET OF PEOPLE WHO COULD PROFIT FROM IT...

"TO PROTECT THE SERUM, SALLIS INJECTED HIMSELF WITH THE ONLY EXISTING SAMPLE OF IT! HIS CAR THEN PLUNGED INTO THE MURKY SWAMPS...

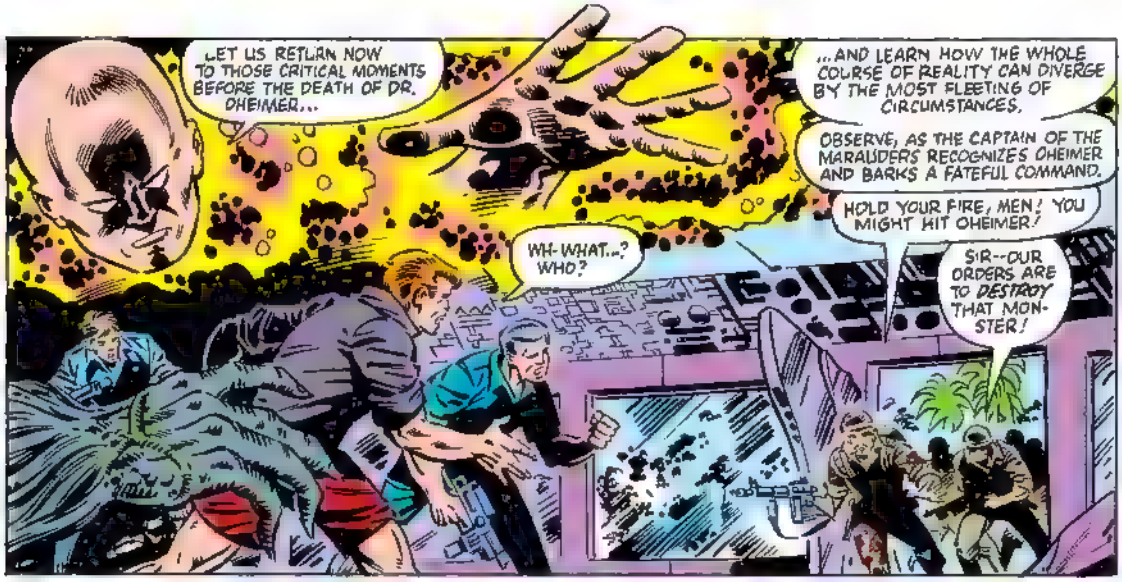
"UNKNOWN TO HIM, THE SWAMP WAS THE FOCUS OF THE MYSTERIOUS **NEXUS OF ALL REALITIES**-- AND THE WATERS WERE CHARGED WITH ITS ENERGIES ..

"...ENERGIES WHICH MINGLED WITH SALLIS' SERUM -- AND TRANSFORMED TED SALLIS INTO THE MISSHAPEN **MAN-THING**!

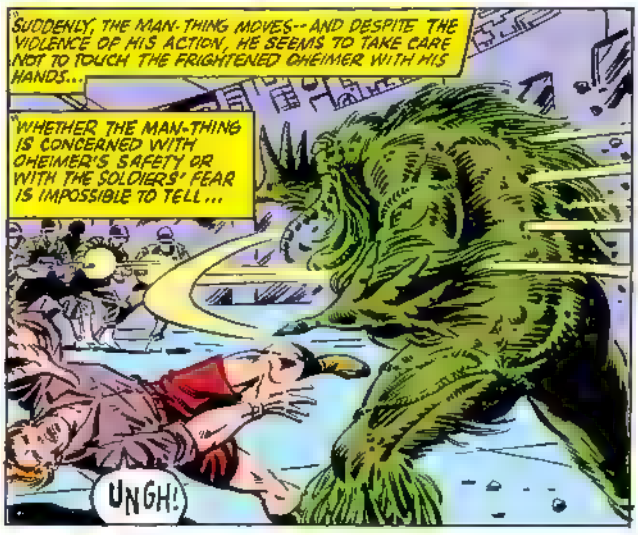
"SALLIS HAD BECOME A THING MORE VEGETABLE THAN ANIMAL, A MINDLESS, WALKING MOUND OF SWAMP MUCK. HIS NEW FORM HAD GREAT STRENGTH, WAS VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE ..

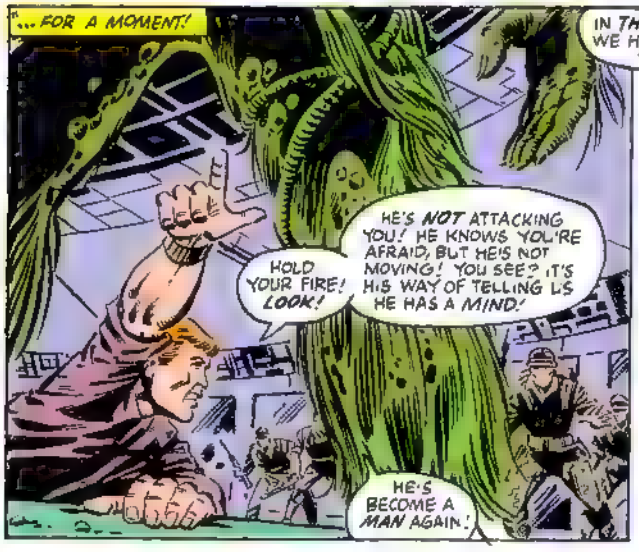
" AND IT REACTED TO THE **EMOTIONS** AROUND IT, OF WHICH **FEAR** IS THE MOST ABHORRENT...

"...AND WHATEVER KNOWS FEAR **BURNS** AT THE MAN-THING'S TOUCH!


LET US RETURN NOW TO THOSE CRITICAL MOMENTS BEFORE THE DEATH OF DR. OHEIMER...
...AND LEARN HOW THE WHOLE COURSE OF REALITY CAN DIVERGE BY THE MOST FLEETING OF CIRCUMSTANCES.
OBSERVE, AS THE CAPTAIN OF THE MARAUDERS RECOGNIZES OHEIMER AND BARKS A FATEFUL COMMAND.
HOLD YOUR FIRE, MEN! YOU MIGHT HIT OHEIMER!
WH-WHAT...? WHO?
SIR--OUR ORDERS ARE TO DESTROY THAT MONSTER!

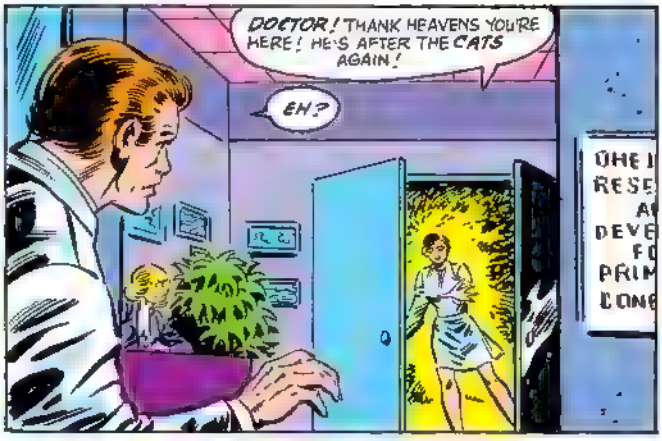
NO! WAIT! WE'RE RECONSTRUCTING THE BRAIN OF A MAN IN THIS CREATURE!
IF YOU DAMAGE THE BRAIN, WE'LL NEVER SAVE THE MAN!
"THE SOLDIERS PAY OHEIMER NO HEED-- AND, IN HIS WAY, THE MAN-THING CAN SENSE THEIR FEAR!

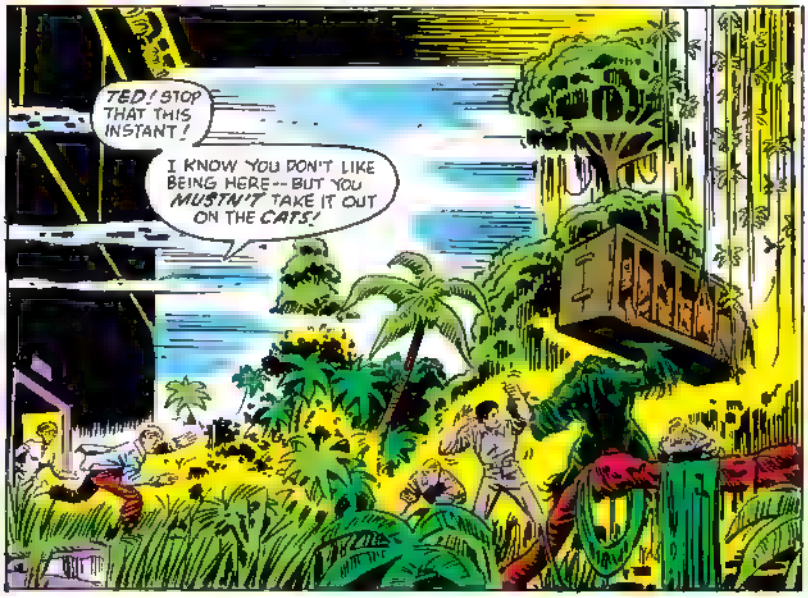

SUDDENLY, THE MAN-THING MOVES--AND DESPITE THE VIOLENCE OF HIS ACTION, HE SEEMS TO TAKE CARE NOT TO TOUCH THE FRIGHTENED OHEIMER WITH HIS HANDS...
"WHETHER THE MAN-THING IS CONCERNED WITH OHEIMER'S SAFETY OR WITH THE SOLDIERS' FEAR IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL...
UNGH!


...FOR A MOMENT!
HOLD YOUR FIRE! LOOK!
HE'S NOT ATTACKING YOU! HE KNOWS YOU'RE AFRAID, BUT HE'S NOT MOVING! YOU SEE? IT'S HIS WAY OF TELLING US HE HAS A MIND!
HE'S BECOME A MAN AGAIN!

IN THAT CASE, DOCTOR, WE HAVE A DEAL FOR YOU!
WH-WHO ARE YOU?
FBI, DR OHEIMER! WE WANT YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR PROJECT--AND WE'RE WILLING TO FOOT THE BILL!
"OHEIMER CAN DO NOTHING BUT STUTTER A HASTY 'YES'...

"AND A FEW WEEKS LATER, IN A LAB OUTSIDE OF MIAMI..


DOCTOR! THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE HERE! HE'S AFTER THE CATS AGAIN!
EH?

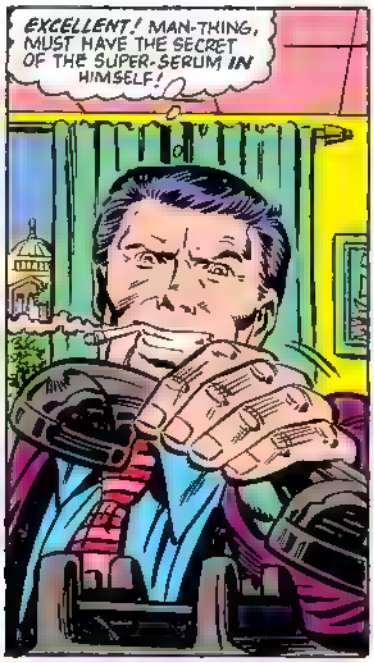

TED! STOP THAT THIS INSTANT!
I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE BEING HERE--BUT YOU MUSTN'T TAKE IT OUT ON THE CATS!

WE COULDN'T PROGRESS ANY FURTHER AT THE SWAMP! YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, DON'T YOU? WE'VE BROUGHT YOU ALL THE WAY TO THE MENTAL STATUS OF AN ADOLESCENT...

...BUT WE HAVE SO FAR TO GO! WE'VE MADE THIS PLACE AS MUCH LIKE THE SWAMP AS POSSIBLE--SO YOU WON'T DIE--BUT YOU CAN'T GO BACK TO THE SWAMP IF YOU WANT YOUR WHOLE MIND BACK.
THAT'S IT DOC! KEEP TALKING!

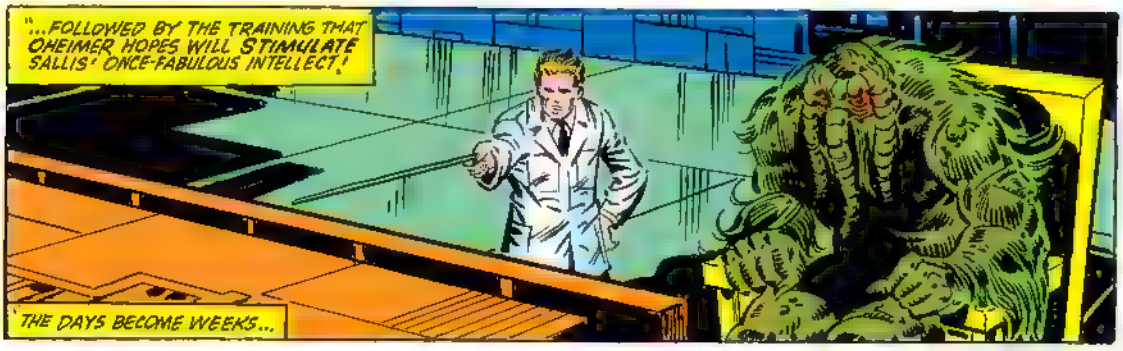
IT MAKES MY JOB SO MUCH EASIER TO DO!
HELLO! BENDIX?
I GOT YOUR SAMPLE! ONE PRIME, SLIMY CHUNK OF MAN-THING.

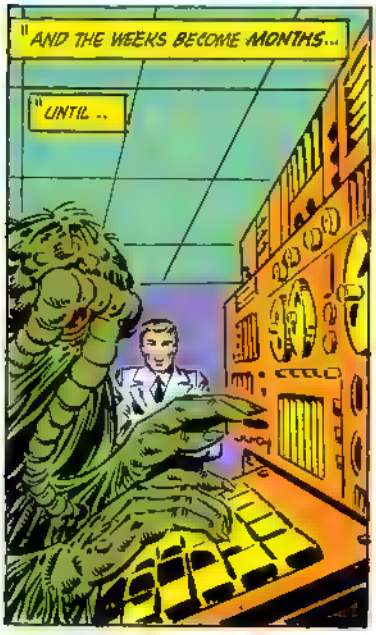
WONDERFUL! DON'T DO ANYTHING TO BLOW YOUR COVER!
I'LL BE OVER TO GET THE SAMPLE--ON THE PRETEXT OF CHECKING ON OHEIMER!


EXCELLENT! MAN-THING, MUST HAVE THE SECRET OF THE SUPER-SERUM IN HIMSELF!

NOW THAT WE HAVE A SAMPLE FROM THE MAN-THING, OUR SCIENTISTS CAN UNRAVEL HIS SECRETS! WE CAN CREATE AN ARMY OF MAN-THINGS...
... AND WE WON'T NEED SALLIS--OR OHEIMER--ANYMORE!

"MEANWHILE, AT THE LAB, NEITHER DOCTOR NOR PATIENT SUSPECT TREACHERY...
...AND, DAY AFTER DAY, THE INJECTIONS THAT ARE COALESCING THE BRAIN CELLS OF TED SALLIS GO ON.

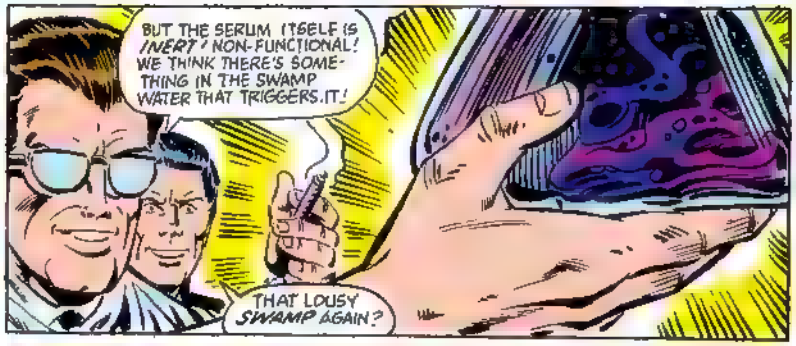

"...FOLLOWED BY THE TRAINING THAT OHEIMER HOPES WILL STIMULATE SALLIS' ONCE-FABULOUS INTELLECT!
THE DAYS BECOME WEEKS...

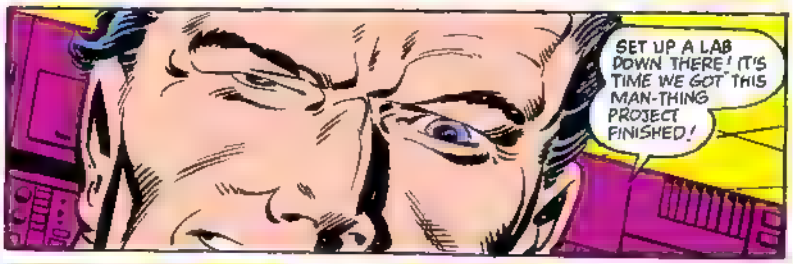

"AND THE WEEKS BECOME MONTHS...
"UNTIL ..

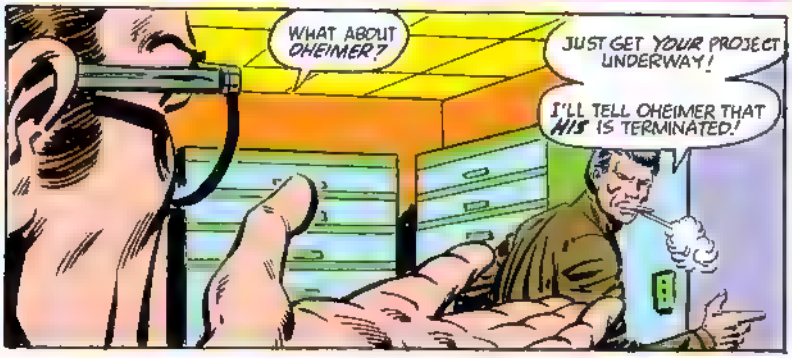
TED! GREAT NEWS! ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS, YOU NOW HAVE YOUR FULL INTELLECT!
NEXT, WE HAVE TO COME UP WITH AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO COMMUNICATE--AND THEN WE'LL WORK TOGETHER TO TURN YOU INTO A MAN AGAIN!

WILL WE, DOCTOR?
I HAVE OTHER PLANS, DR OHEIMER--AND THEY INVOLVE NOTHING SO MUNDANE!
"OHEIMER HAS NOT YET DISCOVERED HIS ERROR! TED SALLIS' MIND IS INTACT ONCE MORE--BUT NO HUMANITY LIGHTS THE EYES OF THE MAN-THING!

"MEANWHILE, IN A TOP SECRET LABORATORY NEAR THE NATION'S CAPITOL...
YOU'VE DONE IT? CRACKED SALLIS' SECRET?
WE'VE FOUND THE SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM, YES...


BUT THE SERUM ITSELF IS INERT! NON-FUNCTIONAL! WE THINK THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE SWAMP WATER THAT TRIGGERS IT!
THAT LOUSY SWAMP AGAIN?

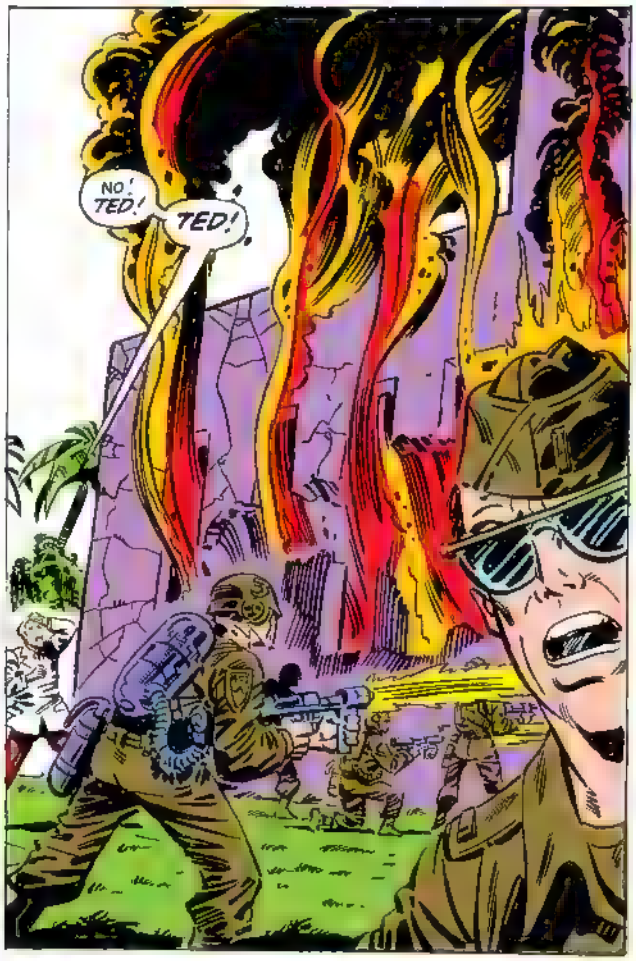

SET UP A LAB DOWN THERE! IT'S TIME WE GOT THIS MAN-THING PROJECT FINISHED!


WHAT ABOUT OHEIMER?
JUST GET YOUR PROJECT UNDERWAY!
I'LL TELL OHEIMER THAT HIS IS TERMINATED!

"AND, A FEW HOURS LATER ..
YOU SEE, DOCTOR, WE CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO WASTE THE TAXPAYERS' MONEY ANY LONGER!
BUT... WE'RE DOING SO WELL!

ARE YOU?
SO FAR, ALL WE KNOW IS THAT YOU TURNED THE MONSTER INTO YOUR TRAINED PET! WE'VE NO SIGNS THAT SALLIS' MIND IS INTACT!
BUT... BUT.

BESIDES, IT'S TOO LATE! HAVE STRIPPED YOUR LAB OF EQUIPMENT--
--I'VE SENT IN A TASK FORCE TO TAKE CARE OF THE MAN-THING!
YOU DID WHAT? NO!


NO! TED!
TED!

HOLD IT, DOCTOR! YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! THERE'S A MAN IN THERE! I'VE GOT TO SAVE TED SALLIS!
IT'S TOO LATE, DOCTOR! THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OF THE LAB BUT ASHES!

YOU MURDERED HIM! OUT AND OUT MUR--!
DR. OHEIMER'S UNDER A STRAIN! GET HIM TO A HOTEL IN MIAMI, WHERE HE CAN REST!

HERE'S A ONE-WAY TICKET BACK TO WISCONSIN! USE IT! GO HOME, OHEIMER! FORGET ALL THIS--AND GO HOME!

EVERYTHING'S SET, SIR! ALL THE EQUIPMENT'S LOADED ON THE TRUCKS!
GOOD! ROLL OUT!
I WANT EVERYTHING AT THE EVERGLADES LAB BY MIDNIGHT!

"MIDNIGHT. A CONVOY LED BY BENDIX MOVES DOWN NARROW ROADS IN THE MURKY SWAMPS...

"IT WAS HERE THAT THE MAN-THING WAS BORN.

"IT IS HERE THAT BENDIX SEEKS TO CREATE A NEW ARMY OF SUPER-STRONG, VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE MONSTERS.

"IN THE LAST TRUCK OF THE CONVOY...

KINDA CREEPY 'ROUND HERE, AIN'T IT, WILLIS?

NOTHIN' TO BE WORRIED ABOUT, BURT... NOT SINCE THE MUCK-MONSTER DIED...

HEY! DIDJA HEAR THAT?

HEAR WHAT?

OHEIMER AND I HAD PLANNED ROUTES OUT OF THE LAB IN CASE OF FIRE!

WHEN I OVERHEARD YOU WERE COMING TO THE SWAMP, I HID--

I LET YOU BRING ME HERE, BUT YOU ARE OF NO FURTHER USE TO ME!

AS THE MAN-THING GRABS THEM, THE SOLDIERS ARE SWALLOWED BY FEAR AND WHATEVER KNOWS FEAR BURNS AT THE MAN-THING'S TOUCH!

KRASH

WHAT THE DEVIL WAS THAT?

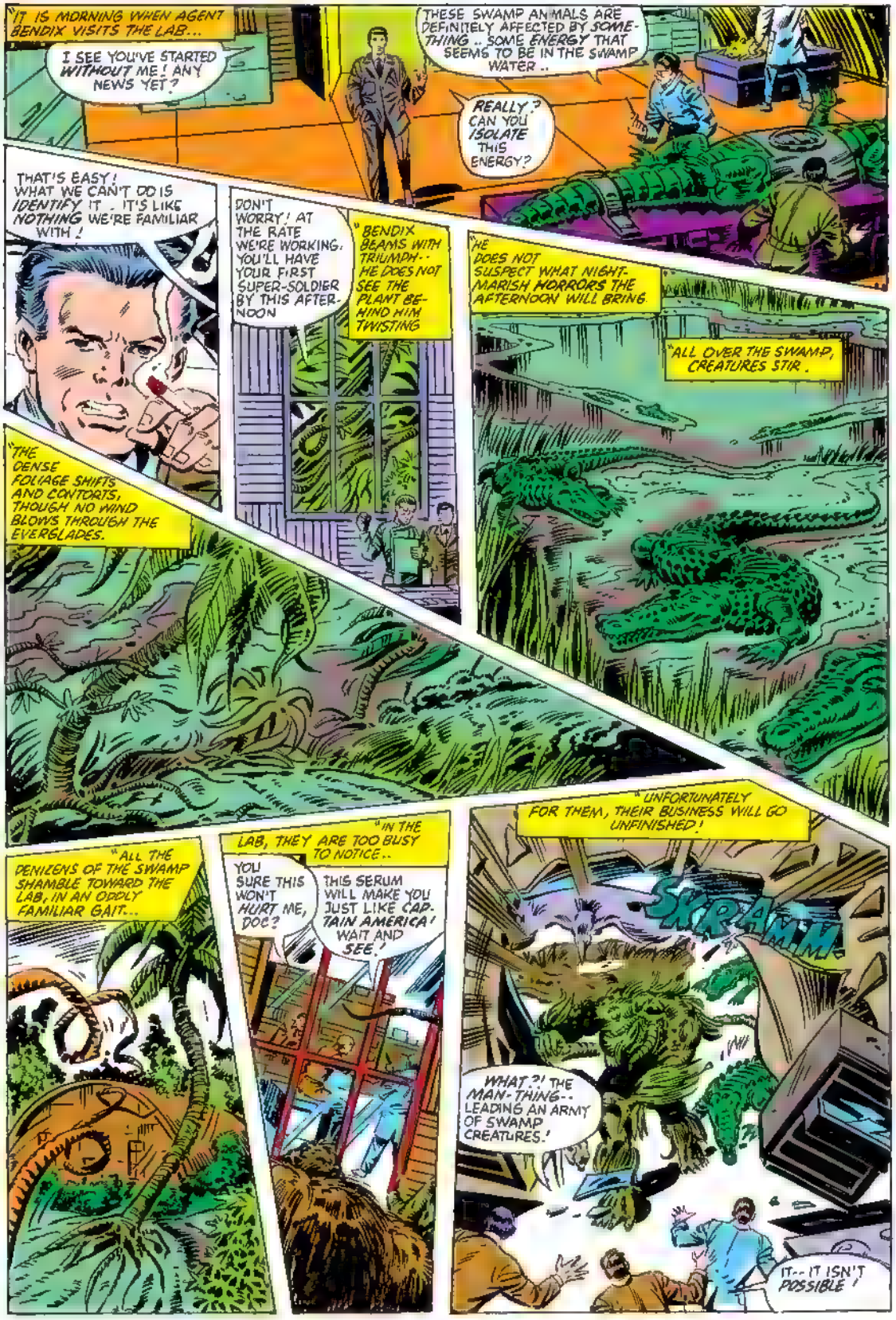
ONE OF THE TRUCKS, SIR... IT WENT OFF THE ROAD!

THOSE FOOLS MUST HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP!

WELL, THEY WEREN'T CARRYING ANYTHING IMPORTANT! PROCEED!

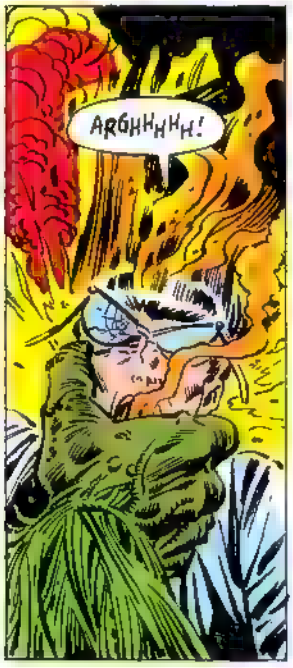
YES, BENDIX! PROCEED!

I'LL BE COMING FOR YOU-- SOON!

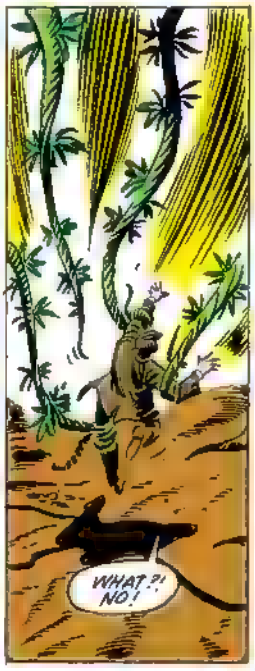

"IT IS MORNING WHEN AGENT BENDIX VISITS THE LAB...
I SEE YOU'VE STARTED WITHOUT ME! ANY NEWS YET?
THESE SWAMP ANIMALS ARE DEFINITELY AFFECTED BY SOMETHING .. SOME ENERGY THAT SEEMS TO BE IN THE SWAMP WATER ..
REALLY? CAN YOU ISOLATE THIS ENERGY?
THAT'S EASY! WHAT WE CAN'T DO IS IDENTIFY IT . IT'S LIKE NOTHING WE'RE FAMILIAR WITH!
DON'T WORRY! AT THE RATE WE'RE WORKING, YOU'LL HAVE YOUR FIRST SUPER-SOLDIER BY THIS AFTERNOON
"BENDIX BEAMS WITH TRIUMPH-- HE DOES NOT SEE THE PLANT BEHIND HIM TWISTING
"HE DOES NOT SUSPECT WHAT NIGHTMARISH HORRORS THE AFTERNOON WILL BRING.
"ALL OVER THE SWAMP, CREATURES STIR.
"THE DENSE FOLIAGE SHIFTS AND CONTORTS, THOUGH NO WIND BLOWS THROUGH THE EVERGLADES.
"ALL THE DENIZENS OF THE SWAMP SHAMBLE TOWARD THE LAB, IN AN ODDLY FAMILIAR GAIT...
"IN THE LAB, THEY ARE TOO BUSY TO NOTICE..
YOU SURE THIS WON'T HURT ME, DOC?
THIS SERUM WILL MAKE YOU JUST LIKE CAPTAIN AMERICA! WAIT AND SEE!
"UNFORTUNATELY FOR THEM, THEIR BUSINESS WILL GO UNFINISHED!
SKRAMM
WHAT?! THE MAN-THING-- LEADING AN ARMY OF SWAMP CREATURES!
IT-- IT ISN'T POSSIBLE!

ISN'T IT, BENDIX?
ALONE OF ALL BEINGS, I AM ONE WITH THIS SWAMP..

THE NEXUS OF ALL REALITIES IS IN THIS SWAMP .. AND ITS ENERGIES MADE ME WHAT I AM.
I AM THE SWAMP I AM THE NEXUS..

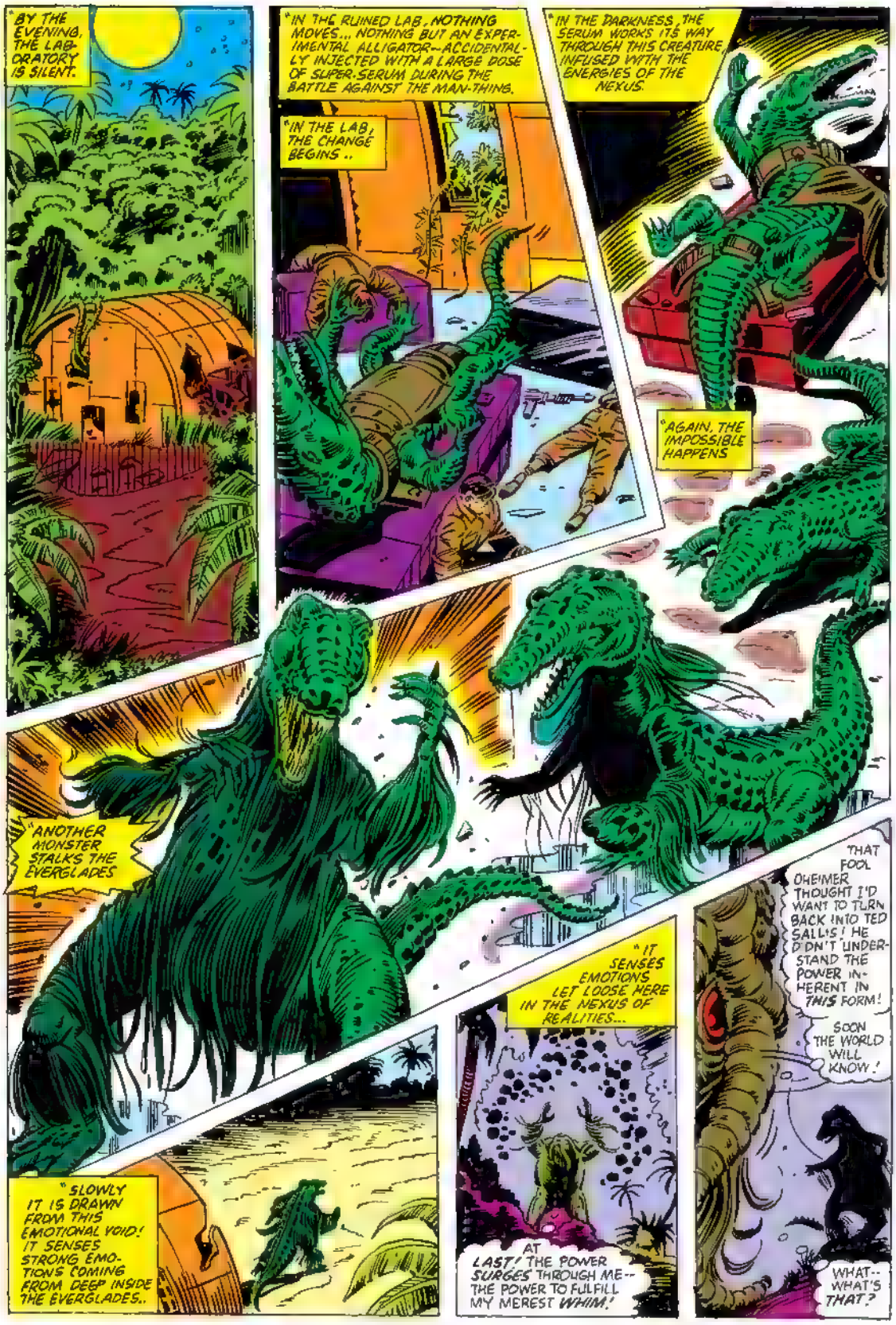

ARGHHHHH!

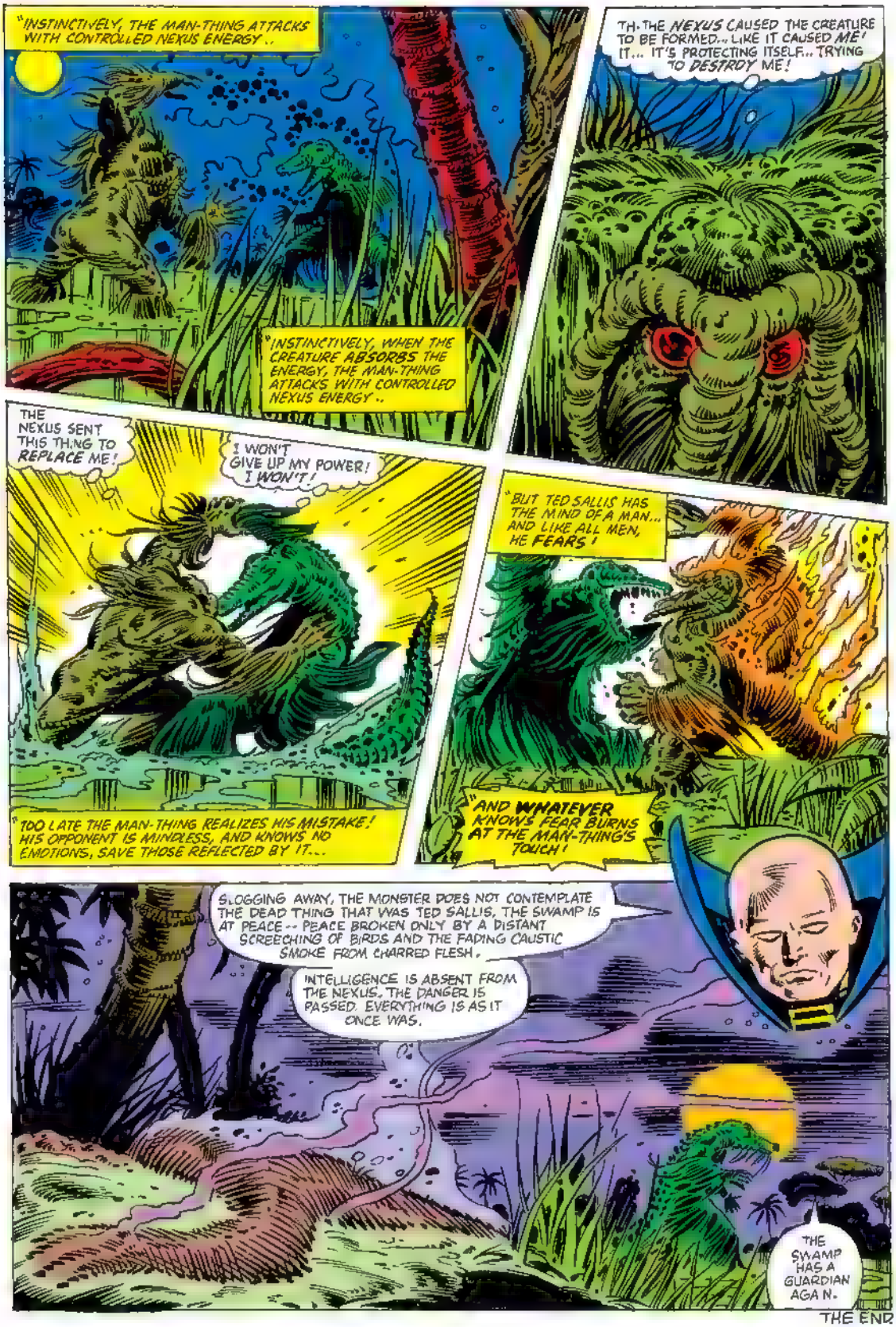
AND NOW THAT I HAVE A MIND, BENDIX.
STOP! STAY AWAY!


WHAT?! NO!

NOW THAT I HAVE A MIND, I CONTROL THE SWAMP!
KRUUNCH!
NOOOOO...!

MY CREATURES WILL FINISH OFF THE LAB!
I MUST FIND THE NEXUS-- FOR, WITH MY MIND, I CAN CONTROL THE NEXUS.
WHEN I HARNESS ITS ENERGIES--I WILL CONTROL ALL REALITY!


"BY THE EVENING, THE LABORATORY IS SILENT.
"IN THE RUINED LAB, NOTHING MOVES... NOTHING BUT AN EXPERIMENTAL ALLIGATOR--ACCIDENTALLY INJECTED WITH A LARGE DOSE OF SUPER-SERUM DURING THE BATTLE AGAINST THE MAN-THING.
"IN THE LAB, THE CHANGE BEGINS..
"IN THE DARKNESS, THE SERUM WORKS ITS WAY THROUGH THIS CREATURE, INFUSED WITH THE ENERGIES OF THE NEXUS.
"AGAIN, THE IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENS
"ANOTHER MONSTER STALKS THE EVERGLADES
"SLOWLY IT IS DRAWN FROM THIS EMOTIONAL VOID! IT SENSES STRONG EMOTIONS COMING FROM DEEP INSIDE THE EVERGLADES..
"IT SENSES EMOTIONS LET LOOSE HERE IN THE NEXUS OF REALITIES...
AT LAST! THE POWER SURGES THROUGH ME-- THE POWER TO FULFILL MY MEREST WHIM!
THAT FOOL OHEIMER THOUGHT I'D WANT TO TURN BACK INTO TED SALLIS! HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE POWER INHERENT IN THIS FORM!
SOON THE WORLD WILL KNOW!
WHAT-- WHAT'S THAT?


"INSTINCTIVELY, THE MAN-THING ATTACKS WITH CONTROLLED NEXUS ENERGY..
"INSTINCTIVELY, WHEN THE CREATURE ABSORBS THE ENERGY, THE MAN-THING ATTACKS WITH CONTROLLED NEXUS ENERGY..
TH-THE NEXUS CAUSED THE CREATURE TO BE FORMED... LIKE IT CAUSED ME! IT... IT'S PROTECTING ITSELF... TRYING TO DESTROY ME!
THE NEXUS SENT THIS THING TO REPLACE ME!
I WON'T GIVE UP MY POWER! I WON'T!
"TOO LATE THE MAN-THING REALIZES HIS MISTAKE! HIS OPPONENT IS MINDLESS, AND KNOWS NO EMOTIONS, SAVE THOSE REFLECTED BY IT...
"BUT TED SALLIS HAS THE MIND OF A MAN... AND LIKE ALL MEN, HE FEARS!
"AND WHATEVER KNOWS FEAR BURNS AT THE MAN-THING'S TOUCH!
SLOGGING AWAY, THE MONSTER DOES NOT CONTEMPLATE THE DEAD THING THAT WAS TED SALLIS. THE SWAMP IS AT PEACE -- PEACE BROKEN ONLY BY A DISTANT SCREECHING OF BIRDS AND THE FADING CAUSTIC SMOKE FROM CHARRED FLESH.
INTELLIGENCE IS ABSENT FROM THE NEXUS. THE DANGER IS PASSED. EVERYTHING IS AS IT ONCE WAS.
THE SWAMP HAS A GUARDIAN AGAIN.

THE END

Stan Lee PRESENTS: UNTOLD TALES OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE!

I AM THE WATCHER. IT IS MY DUTY TO OBSERVE ALL EVENTS THAT OCCUR IN THIS SECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE

IT IS A TASK I HAVE PERFORMED FOR COUNTLESS AGES, SINCE LONG BEFORE AN OFFSHOOT OF TREE-DWELLING PRIMATES BECAME MAN.

WITNESS, IF YOU WILL, THIS EPOCH-MARKING EVENT FROM PREHISTORY: A PACKET OF LIVING ENERGY, UNLIKE ANY THAT HAS EVER BEEN SEEN, PULSES FROM THE PLANET EARTH ON A TRAJECTORY AWAY FROM THE SUN...

OUTWARD... EVER OUTWARD, IT HURLS AT ONE EIGHTH THE SPEED OF LIGHT

WITHIN THE ENERGY-GLOBULE ARE THE CONVERTED LIFE-FORMS OF TWO DOZEN EXILES OF THE OFFSHOOT OF HUMANKIND KNOWN AS THE ETERNALS...

THEIR CRIME: AGGRESSIVE OPPOSITION TO THE PEACEFUL WAYS OF THEIR FELLOWS

THEIR SENTENCE: TO TRAVERSE THE UNIVERSE FOREVER AS A BODILESS BLOB OF ENERGY

THEIR HOPE OF SALVATION: TO ALTER COURSE JUST ENOUGH TO CATCH THE GRAVITATIONAL FIELD OF SOME PLANET BEFORE REACHING THE INTERSTELLAR VOID

WITH TWENTY-FOUR MINDS WORKING IN UNISON, THEY MANAGE TO VEER INTO THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF THE SEVENTH PLANET FROM THE SUN

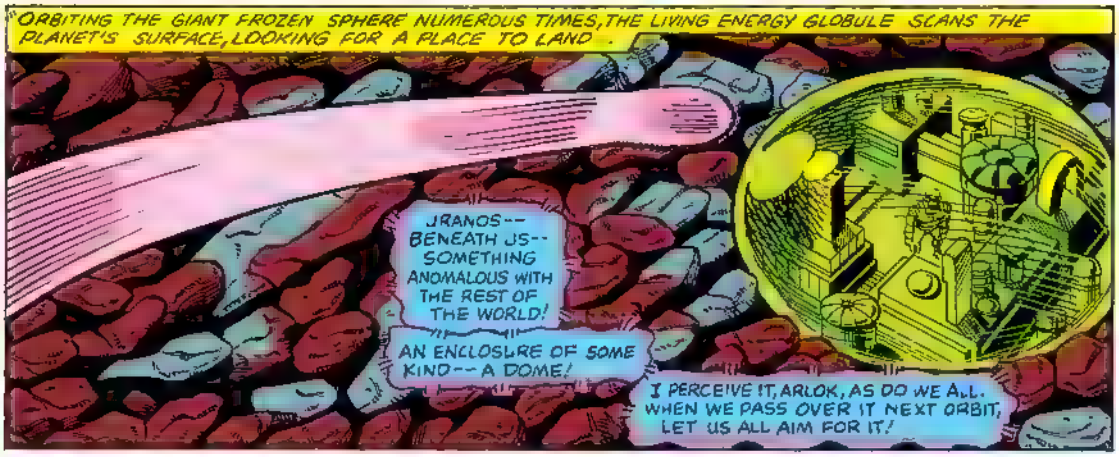
GRUENWALD
WORDS

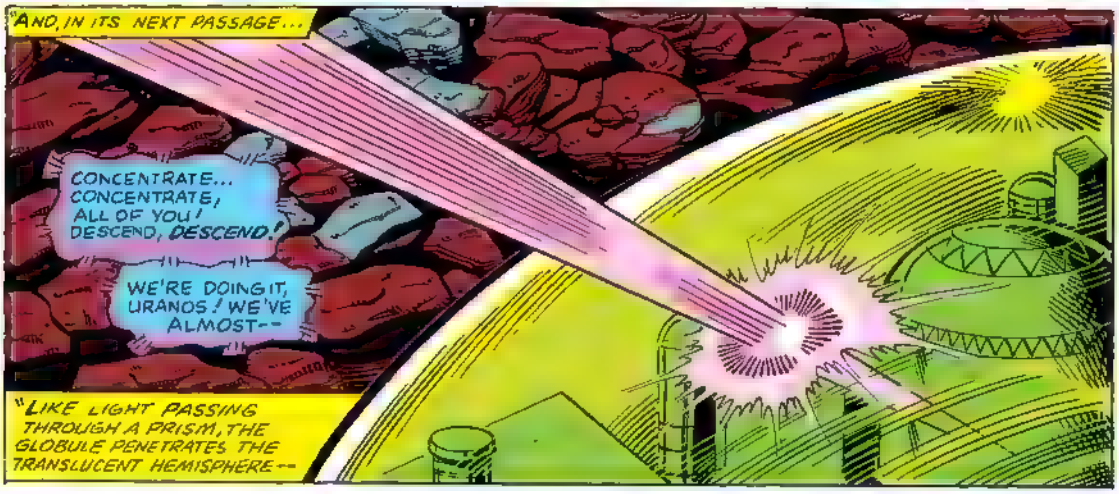
WILSON/PATTERSON
PICTURES

MORELLI
LETTERS

HANNIGAN
COLORS

OUTPOST ON URANUS

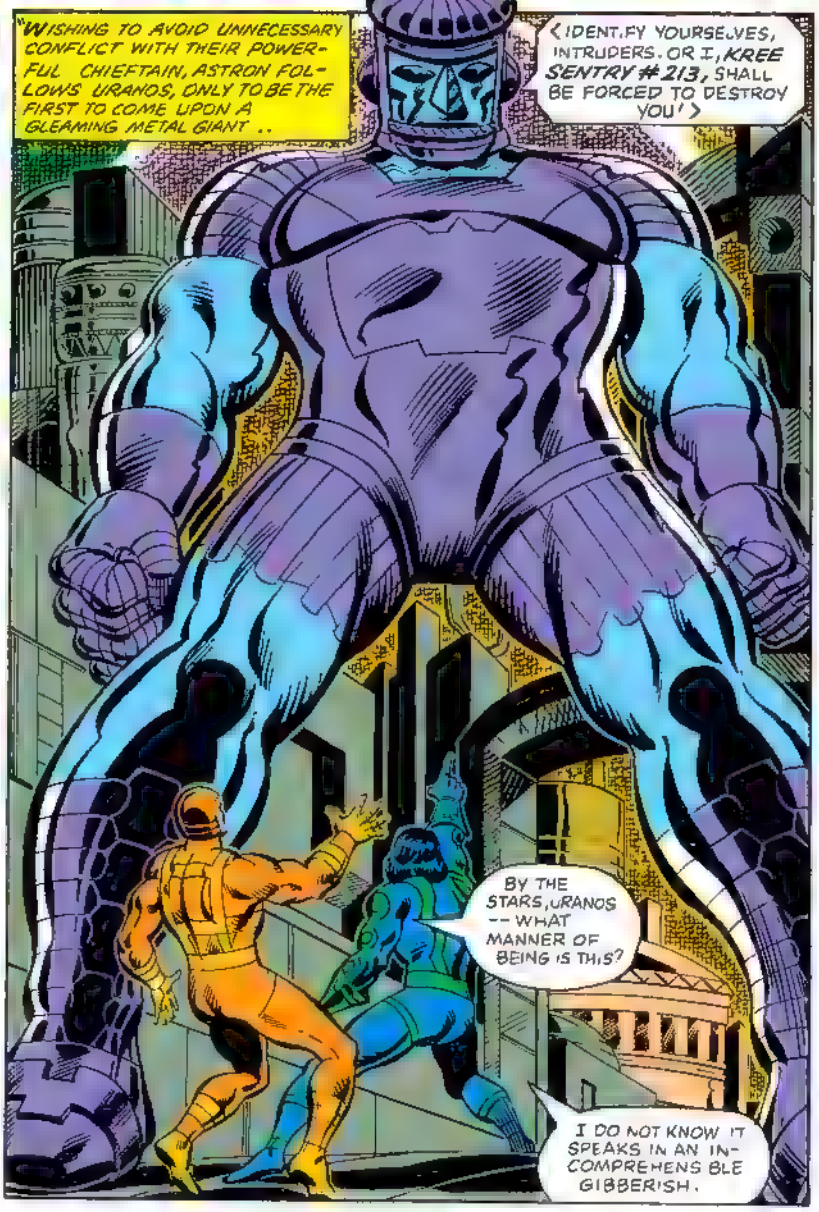

ORBITING THE GIANT FROZEN SPHERE NUMEROUS TIMES, THE LIVING ENERGY GLOBULE SCANS THE PLANET'S SURFACE, LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LAND.
URANOS-- BENEATH US-- SOMETHING ANOMALOUS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD!
AN ENCLOSURE OF SOME KIND-- A DOME!
I PERCEIVE IT, ARLOK, AS DO WE ALL. WHEN WE PASS OVER IT NEXT ORBIT, LET US ALL AIM FOR IT!


AND, IN ITS NEXT PASSAGE...
CONCENTRATE... CONCENTRATE, ALL OF YOU! DESCEND, DESCEND!
WE'RE DOING IT, URANOS! WE'VE ALMOST--
"LIKE LIGHT PASSING THROUGH A PRISM, THE GLOBULE PENETRATES THE TRANSLUCENT HEMISPHERE--

--DISINTEGRATING THE ENERGY BALL INTO ITS COMPONENT MATTER--THE SEPARATE PHYSICAL FORMS OF TWO DOZEN PARA HUMAN BEINGS!
WE VE UNMERGED! BUT HOW?
PASSING THROUGH THE FORCE-FIELD MUST HAVE ABSORBED ENOUGH INERTIA FROM OUR ELECTRONS TO REACTIVATE OUR CORPOREAL FORMS!

LOOK WHERE YOUR INSANE WAR HAS GOTTEN US, URANOS! STUCK UPON SOME DESOLATE WORLD IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE. I WISH I HAD SIDED WITH YOUR BROTHER IN OUR CIVIL WAR!
SILENCE, ASTRON. YOU'LL ANGER HIM!
WHERE ARE WE, URANOS?
SOMEWHERE IN OUR OWN SOLAR SYSTEM, SHASTRA... A PLANET UNGLIMPSED FROM EARTH. I HEARBY PROCLAIM THIS WORLD TO BE MY OWN!
WHAT OF THE BEINGS WHO MUST HAVE BUILT THIS ENCLOSURE?

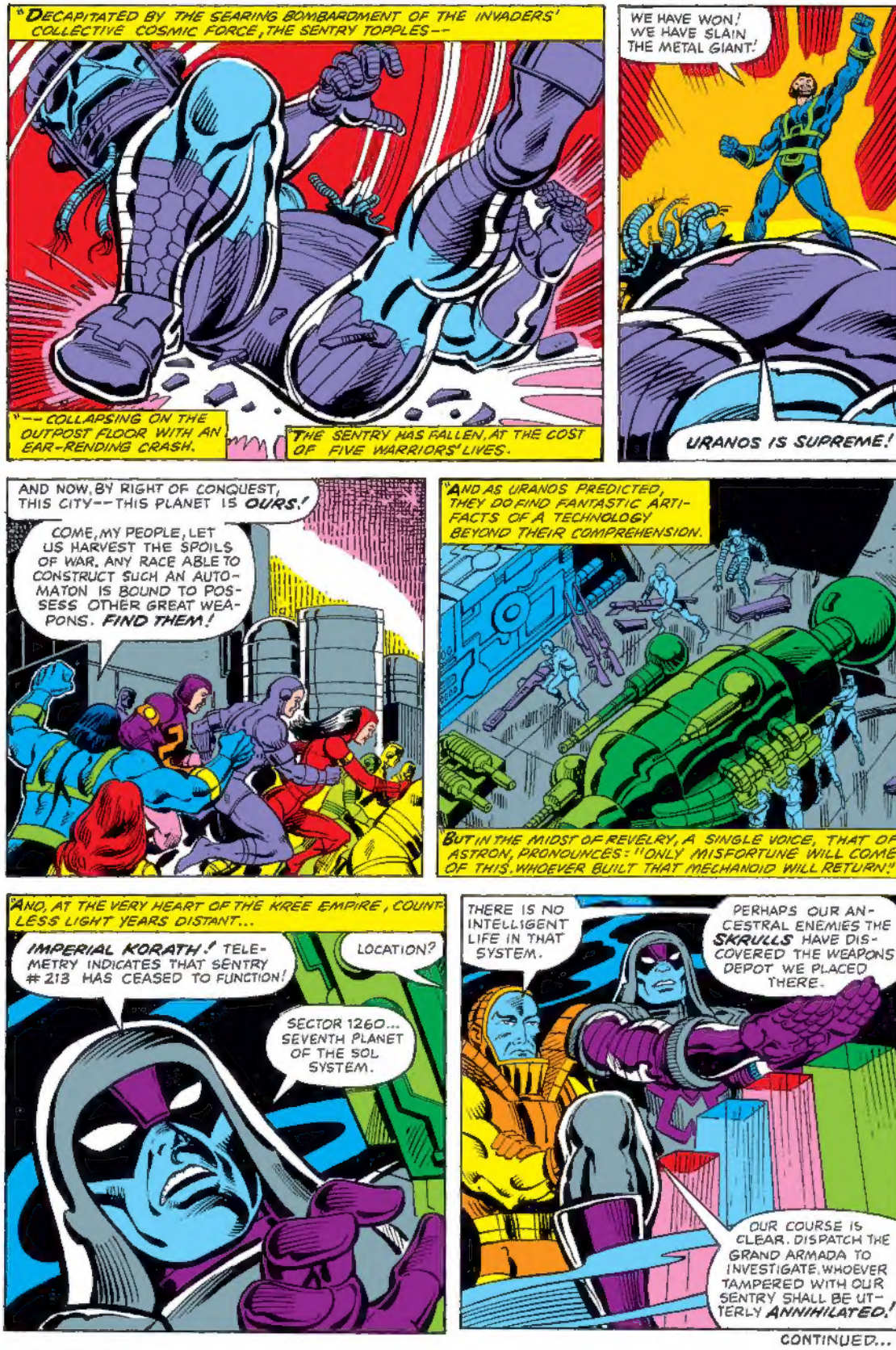
BEFORE WE IMPACTED, I SCANNED THE AREA. THERE IS NO LIFE HERE AS WE KNOW IT!
AND IF THERE WAS, WE WOULD SHOW THEM WHO WAS SUPREME!
LET US DIVIDE OUR RANKS --FAN OUT-- MAKE A THOROUGH SEARCH OF OUR NEW HOME. ASTRON-- COME WITH ME. I WANT TO KEEP AN EYE ON YOU!


WISHING TO AVOID UNNECESSARY CONFLICT WITH THEIR POWERFUL CHIEFTAIN, ASTRON FOLLOWS URANOS, ONLY TO BE THE FIRST TO COME UPON A GLEAMING METAL GIANT ..
<IDENTIFY YOURSELVES, INTRUDERS. OR I, KREE SENTRY #213, SHALL BE FORCED TO DESTROY YOU!>
BY THE STARS, URANOS -- WHAT MANNER OF BEING IS THIS?
I DO NOT KNOW. IT SPEAKS IN AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE GIBBERISH.

ATTACK!

LIKE A FLIGHT OF HAWKS ATTACKING A GREAT BEAR, THE EXILED ETERNALS FEARLESSLY ASSAIL THE SENTRY, UNLEASHING THEIR INNATE POWERS OF MOLECULAR DISRUPTION IN A BARRAGE OF BLASTS.

"AND THEN THE SENTRY RETALIATES WITH THE SPEED AND FEROCITY WHICH HAS MADE HIS KIND FEARED THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY...
<I AM PROGRAMMED TO DEFEND MYSELF FROM ANY AND ALL ATTACK!>
<YOUR AGGRESSION BRANDS YOU AS ENEMIES OF THE KREE EMPIRE. THUS, IT IS MY DUTY TO EXTERMINATE YOU.>
OUR BLASTS DO NOT SEEM TO FAZE HIM.
HE MUST HAVE A WEAK SPOT SOMEWHERE!
THIS IS INSANE -- SIMPLY INSANE!
WE SHOULD BE TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH IT, NOT DESTROY IT!
THE LINES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DRAWN, ASTRON, THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO CONTINUE!
COME, MY GOOD AND LOYAL WARRIORS--
-- WE MUST JOIN TOGETHER OUR COSMIC MIGHT-- STRIKE!
<PUNY ORGANICS -- YOU SHALL N-E>
BZZZZ


"DECAPITATED BY THE SEARING BOMBARDMENT OF THE INVADERS' COLLECTIVE COSMIC FORCE, THE SENTRY TOPPLES--
"--COLLAPSING ON THE OUTPOST FLOOR WITH AN EAR-RENDING CRASH.
THE SENTRY HAS FALLEN, AT THE COST OF FIVE WARRIORS' LIVES.
WE HAVE WON! WE HAVE SLAIN THE METAL GIANT!
URANOS IS SUPREME!
AND NOW, BY RIGHT OF CONQUEST, THIS CITY--THIS PLANET IS OURS!
COME, MY PEOPLE, LET US HARVEST THE SPOILS OF WAR. ANY RACE ABLE TO CONSTRUCT SUCH AN AUTOMATON IS BOUND TO POSSESS OTHER GREAT WEAPONS. FIND THEM!
"AND AS URANOS PREDICTED, THEY DO FIND FANTASTIC ARTIFACTS OF A TECHNOLOGY BEYOND THEIR COMPREHENSION.
BUT IN THE MIDST OF REVELRY, A SINGLE VOICE, THAT OF ASTRON, PRONOUNCES: "ONLY MISFORTUNE WILL COME OF THIS. WHOEVER BUILT THAT MECHANOID WILL RETURN!"
"AND, AT THE VERY HEART OF THE KREE EMPIRE, COUNTLESS LIGHT YEARS DISTANT...
IMPERIAL KORATH! TELEMETRY INDICATES THAT SENTRY #213 HAS CEASED TO FUNCTION!
LOCATION?
SECTOR 1260... SEVENTH PLANET OF THE SOL SYSTEM.
THERE IS NO INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THAT SYSTEM.
PERHAPS OUR ANCESTRAL ENEMIES THE SKRULLS HAVE DISCOVERED THE WEAPONS DEPOT WE PLACED THERE.
OUR COURSE IS CLEAR. DISPATCH THE GRAND ARMADA TO INVESTIGATE. WHOEVER TAMPERED WITH OUR SENTRY SHALL BE UTTERLY ANNIHILATED!

CONTINUED...

WHY NOT?

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

DENNIS O'NEIL
EDITOR
MARK GRUENWALD
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Don and Fred,

I've been a steady Marvel reader for over 15 years and rarely have I been touched by any particualr story to take the initiative to drop a line to you guys. But after WHAT IF #22 I just had to write. "WHAT IF Doctor Doom had become a hero?" was one of the greatest stories I've read in comics. Don Glut succeeded in giving us a story with near-perfect characterization, meaningful dialogue, and legitimately touching moralistic drama. I liken the story to a Shakespearean morality play in modern superhero garb. Doctor Doom's inner struggle between his love for a woman and his own exaggerated pride is a struggle not so far removed from those we all face at crucial times in our lives. It just comes in a different, less cosmic, form. Anyway, you've succeeded in motivating one lethargic reader to action. More masterpieces like WHAT IF #22 and I'm liable to get writer's cramp.

Tom Filsinger
1916 Bromton Dr.
Lyndhurst, OH 44124

Well, as occasional victims of that particular malady, we wouldn't wish it on anyone, but we do hope that our tales of alternate realities continue to grab you, Tom. It seems that you were not alone in your appreciation of the Doctor Doom headliner. To wit...

Dear Marvel,

WHAT IF #22: interesting issue. I liked Fred Kida's pencils a lot; they remind me of a less stylized George Tuska. Kida is really too good an artist and inker not to be working regularly for you.

Don Glut's story was one of his best. Demonstrating Rudolfo's power-hunger, merely hinted at in his other appearances, was a great move. Glut also portrayed Mephisto wonderfully. Here he is truly the Tempter, offering Doom horrible choices, one of which he must accept. In the end, Doom's pride and self-importance cause him to lose Valeria in this reality as well as ours. Even as a hero, Doom is prouder that he is noble. Mephisto has beaten Doom: he has made him suffer.

Alan R. Ekblaw
1015 Tomahawk Trail
Scotia, NY 12302

Dear Marvel,

I've just read WHAT IF #22 and I have to say I was impressed. I was expecting a shoddier treatment of Doc Doom's personality. Here he retained his vanity, his love of melodrama. Not since the early days of ASTONISHING TALES has Victor Von Doom the person been handled so well.

I do wonder though if Mephisto would actually have ever felt rivalled by Doom. We're talking about a being with the power of Satan (if he is not indeed Satan himself). Also, if Doctor Doom ever had the power to turn someone into a toad, I'll eat my FOOM membership card.

P.S. Three cheers for the return of the noble No-Prize.

Mike Ahern
Topsfield, MA

Our Doctor Doom may not have pursued his mother's sorcerous arts on our reality line, but on the one depicted in WHAT IF #22, he obviously did. Indeed, Doom's sorcerous leanings are what got him noticed by Mephisto in the first place. As far as Mephisto's scope of interest and power, that has yet to be measured. Keep you eyes open, though, pal. We've heard rumors that the satanic one is due for an appearance in DOCTOR STRANGE one of these fine months, and that tale is certain to reveal new facets of the Lord of Darkness.

Dear People,

WHAT IF #22 was if nothing else, different.

The idea of Doctor Doom as a hero is not so strange. He has the strength of character and the nobility. He also has a sense of justice, though it may differ from ours. Most of all he has the attitude that would make it work. I don't think there are many characters in the Marvel Universe who are more determined.

Of course, even the heroic Doom suffers from too great a sense of his self-worth. Instead of sacrificing himself for the one he loves, he insists that the world must not be deprived of Doom! If he could have looked past his own self-esteem he might have realized that Reed Richards could easily have carried on for him.

Still character defects are what make people people. Without them nobility and sacrifice would occur so often they'd lose all meaning. Still, it would have been nice to see what might have happened to Doom if he had not been so arrogant. Again, another issue of WHAT IF ends up with a depressing ending! This time however it is easy to see that there hero is plagued by flaws in himself not by mere twists of fate. More than in any previous issue, this story demands a sequel.

Sheldon A. Wiebe
5-828 Memorial Dr. NW
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

A sequel, huh? What do the rest of you out there say? As always, your comments and suggestions are a vital force in shaping the direction of our multifarious magazines, particularly this one.

And now for a few reactions to WHAT IF #23, the first of our new multiple-story format issues...

Dear Mark and Denny,

WHAT IF #23 was a far better issue than I had expected. I have to say I was very turned off by the misleading cover "WHAT IF the Hulk Had Become a Barbarian," since it had no connection to the actual story inside, "WHAT IF Hulk's Girlfriend Jarella had not died?" Even if you were imitating Conan just to be cute, I did not appreciate it.

However, Peter Gillis really did a bang-up job on the story. He wove a mighty fine tale around a pretty standard idea. I loved the line: "Goodby, Ross...Hulk didn't hate you...really." It summed up the Hulk's entire character— one of childlike simplicity and inability to truly hate. I did wish that the Hulk versus Hulk sequence had been given a bit more space. By all means, though, let's see Peter Gillis back in these pages again.

The new/old Eternals origin in your first installment of "Untold Tales of the Marvel Universe" series was quite nice— a total surprise, too. After enjoying Jack Kirby's original series and Roy Thomas' attempt to incorporate their mythos into THOR, this expanded retelling of the First Celestial Host was a treat not to be beat. I look forward to the next issue to lear what the first Eternals were like.

The lowest point of this issue, and perhaps the pits of this year's Marvels was "WHAT IF Aunt May Had Been Bitten by a Radioactive Spider?" I have a great deal of respect for Steve Skeates and Al Kupperberg, but they fumbled this time around. This simply did not a story make.

As to the multi-story package, I vote yes as long as it doesn't put you in a bind. I don't want to see you sacrifice story length just to slide another small feature in. I want to see tales unfolded in their best possible length, whether it be ten pages or forty.

Tom A. Field
37 Windsor Ave.
Augusta, ME 04330

That's just how Denny and I see it, Tom: letting the story determine its own basic length. While most of our lead features are slated to run twenty pages, we will still present 34-page extravaganzas like last issue's Thor-Odin battle or next issue's X-Men epic when the story merits the added length. Your comments reflected the consensus of opinion on WHAT IF #23's back-up features; that is, thumbs up on the "Untold Tales" series, and thumbs down on the Aunt May satire. But first, let's hear a few more reactions to WHAT IF #23's lead story...

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
(REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Title of Publication: WHAT IF
2. Date of Filing: October 1, 1980
3. Frequency of Issue: BI-MONTHLY
3A. No. of issues published annually: 6
3B. Annual subscription price: $9.00
4. Location of Known Office of Publication: 575 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022
5. Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publishers: 575 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022
6. Names and addresses of the publisher, editor, and managing editor are: Stan Lee, 575 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022; Editor: Jim Shooter, 575 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022; Managing Editor: Jim Shooter, 575 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.
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8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None.
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10. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION

	Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months	Single issue nearest to filing date
A. Total No. Copies Printed (net press run)	260,000	260,000
B. Paid Circulation: 1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	26,037	22,000
2) Mail subscriptions	121,893	141,823
C. Total Paid Circulation (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2)	147,930	163,823
D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies	2,555	1,177
E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D)	150,485	165,000
F. Copies not distributed: 1) Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	109,515	95,000
2) Return from News Agents	1,029	0
G. Total (Sum of E, F1 and 2 should equal net press run shown in A)	260,000	260,000

11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(signed) Ed Shulun — Business Manager

12. For completion by publishers mailing at the regular rates (Section 132.121, Postal Service Manual) 39 U.S.C. 3626 provides in pertinent part: "No person who would have been entitled to mail matter under former section 4359 of this title shall mail such matter at the rates provided under this subsection unless he has filed a written request for permission to mail matter at such rates."

In acceptance with the provisions of this statute, I hereby request permission to mail the publication named in item 1 at the reduced postage rates presently authorized by 39 U.S.C. 3626.

(signed) Ed Shulun — Business Manager

Dear WHAT IF staff,

I'm not much of a HULK fan (blasphemy!), one of the main reasons being that there will never be hope for curing him. However, that doesn't matter in WHAT IF. In issue #23, Bruce Banner and the Hulk are finally happy, and for once so was I. Unfortunately, there are a number of loose ends, questions, and mysteries that obviously make a sequel necessary. This in itself is fine, as long as it doesn't end up with the Hulk back on Earth. Let the composite Bruce/Hulk stay on Jarella's world and live a long happy life. He can be miserable in his own mag.

The multiple story format of the book was basically a good one, but I think you could do without the third story. Face it, the concept of Aunt May as "Spider-Granny" was too ridiculous to merit the space. The pages spent on it could have been added to the main story or the "Untold Tales" section, which is a good idea for Marvel oddities like the origin of the Eternals.

Donato Foglia
RD #2 Duck Lane Rd.
Red Creek, NY 13143

Not to worry, Don, when and if we do a sequel to the Hulk/Jarella saga, you can count on it not leading back to the Hulk's old stomping grounds, the Earth. Our purpose in WHAT IF is to show you things the likes of which you could see happen in no other Marvel mag. This criterion, incidentally, is why we feel the "Untold Tales" series belongs in WHAT IF even though it features accounts of *mainstream* reality rather than *alternate* ones. In no other magazine is there the space to leisurely examine the origins and history of the Marvel Universe and its many unsung heroes of ages past.

And now, in interests of a balanced letters section, here's a letter from someone who was less than pleased with WHAT IF #23...

Dear People,

WHAT IF #23, I feel, represents an all-time low in the series. There was nothing wrong with the lead story idea, *per se*, but flawed scripting coupled with too much cramming made for a mass of confusion.

First off, it would have been nice if you had settled on a title before the issue went to print. What if the the Hulk had become a barbarian indeed? Might be a nice story sometime, but we sure didn't read about it in this issue. In the story we don't see the Hulk wielding a battle axe against primitive green savages with swords and spears, we see specially-bred super heroes shooting guns and flying. Were you afraid a title reflecting the real story might not be as commercial?

As to the scripting, I wish the writer had gone back over previous issues to get his facts straight. To explain: The spell that gave the Hulk the mind of Bruce Banner was lifted in HULK #156. Since the Hulk's return to K'ai in WHAT IF #23 takes place circa HULK #203, why does Banner's mind return? 2) Jarella's city is shown to be rebuilt without explanation. In HULK #156 it had been destroyed by Visis; HULK #203 proved it was never rebuilt because of the earthquakes caused by the Hulk kicking the planet out of orbit. In HULK #247 we learned that further earthquakes toppled the remaining cities of K'ai into dust, because of the Hulk's destruction of the slide containing the micro-world. Captain Marvel returned Hulk to an almost-dead world in HULK #247 while WHAT IF #23 shows it in its full glory.

To be fair, it may be that with only twenty pages, you didn't have the room to properly explain things and tie up loose ends. To correct this in the future, you might want to drop the unnecessary back-up stories. In the first place, the Celestials do not represent an "Untold Tale of the Marvel Universe" since they've already been explained fully in both THE ETERNALS and THOR. Second, the Aunt May skit (not a story, by any means) belonged in NOT BRAND ECCH, not WHAT IF. If a "Stunning Saga of an Improbable Reality" is not an imaginary tale, I don't know what is. If the story did not happen in the Marvel Universe or one of its alternates, someone put the story in the wrong mag.

Sorry to come on so strong, people, but that's the way I feel.

David Ayres
410-35 Victory Garden Dr.
Tallahasse, FL 32301

And we're glad you took the time to tell us, David. We value well-thought-out, clearly-expressed criticism of our efforts just as much as we do paeans of praise. To briefly address your major points: the discrepancies in the HULK continuity probably should have been explained in context. The only thing we can mention at this point concerning the apparent destruction of K'ai is that so-called microscopic universes, just like macroscopic ones, *diverge* during significant moments. The Hulk's destruction of K'ai with a kick may well have been one such moment. As for the Celestials feature, while it is true that parts of their coming has been recounted elsewhere, the "Untold Tale" purported to be the definitive account of their arrival on Earth, drawing together in one place all the known facts. Further installments, as you may have seen, get further into "untold" territory. We had to begin at the beginning, you know. As for sagas of "improbable realities," to judge by reader response, it is improbable that we will try one again for quite some time. Okay, pal?

Dear Marvel,

All I can say is that "WHAT IF Hulk's Girlfriend Jarella had not died" was only a fair story. Looking back at the original upon which it was based, I'm very glad that things turned out as they did and not as in WHAT IF #23. Otherwise, I think Hulk might have turned into a very boring character. Who really needs a green-skinned Conan on Jarella's barbaric world? I also thought the ending of the story was the most anti-climactic one I've seen in a WHAT IF to date.

But never fear, guys, all is forgiven...because this issue began the all-new "Untold Tales of the Marvel Universe" series. I must tell you it was a show-stopper. "The First Celestial Host" wasted no words or pictures. Never have the Celestials looked more enormous or powerful or intelligent. Please develop this series to the ends of the universe. You have the chance to create the most amazing book since the FANTASTIC FOUR with this new series. You could even do away with the "WHAT IF" concept altogether and let the Marvel Universe tales take over the entire book. You have the whole spectrum of Marvel mythology to draw from and countless untold story lines to weave. I don't see how you could ever run out of ideas. The Aunt May story really left me cold and I'm sure thousands of readers would just love to see more "real stories" appearing here or even UNTOLD TALES OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #1 in a mag of its own. How about a vote on it?

Bill D. Middleton
1011 W. 14th St.
Clovis, NM 88101

We certainly appreciate your vote of confidence, Bill, but somehow we don't think the anthology-like no-set-star approach to "Untold Tales" would lend itself to a book on its own. We do intend to keep it a continuing back-up feature in WHAT IF for the long haul, though, so all you mainstream Marvel Buffs out there have a special reason to collect WHAT IF (as if our usual stunning sags weren't enough!). We'd love to hear from you out there which periods of Marvel history you'd like to see explored. After the current six-part Eternals mini-series runs its course, we have a number of tales featuring Marvel's other great hidden race, the Inhumans. And after those, what would you next like to see? Untold Tales of Atlantis... theSubterraneans...Wundagore...the wars against the demons...? As Bill said, the field of Marvel mythology is a fertile one indeed, and there are countless chapters of history the Watcher has yet to narrate. Let's hear from you.

And speaking of you readers, it's time for HOW ABOUT— ?!!

WHAT IF...Spider-Man's clone had survived?
— Susan D. Morris
Calgary, Alberta

WHAT IF...The original Nova had not died?
— Chris Trump
Uniontown, PA

WHAT IF...Medusa remained loyal to the Frightful Four and never rejoined the Inhumans?
WHAT IF...the Vision married Jocasta instead of the Scarlet Witch?
— Richard P. Jones
Homer City, PA

WHAT IF...the Hulk was sent back to the age of Conan?
— Robert S. Smith
(No address on letter)

WHAT IF...all thirteen X-Men had remained with the team in GIANT-SIZE X-MEN #1?
WHAT IF...Magneto had recruited the new X-Men to battle the old?
WHAT IF...the Avengers not the Fantastic Four had faced Galactus?
— Wesley Wong
Honolulu, HI

WHAT IF...Peter Parker married Betty Brant?
WHAT IF...Aunt May had been killed not Uncle Ben?
— Thomas Schellenberger
Baltimore, MD

WHAT IF...Peter Parker had been drafted and sent to Viet Nam?
— Glenn R. Wichman
Santa Cove, CA

WHAT IF...Ultron put his own personality into the Vision?
— Steve Anaya
Los Banos, CA

WHAT IF...Betty Ross became the She-Hulk?
WHAT IF...Thunderbird had never died?
WHAT IF...Natasha Romanoff became the second Red Guardian?
WHAT IF...Her brought Warlock back to life?
WHAT IF...Captain America became director of SHIELD?
WHAT IF...the Swordsman hadn't died?
WHAT IF...the Wasp died in AVENGERS #14?
— Randy Bielecki
Payson, AZ

WHAT IF...Rozanne Simpson had become the Ghost Rider intead of Johnny Blaze?
— Joe Scheiderman Jr.
S. Plainfeild,NJ

WHAT IF...Korvac had beaten the Avengers and Guardians and used them to battle Eternity?
— K. Greenblatt
Los Angeles, CA

NEXT ISSUE:
Because you demanded it! WHAT IF Phoenix had lived? Believe us, it's a shocker!
—mg.